

WEST OF ENGLAND RURAL NETWORK

England & Wales · Charity number 1146165

Details

Other names WERN

Status Registered

Legal form Charitable company

Company number [07956732](#)

Registered 2012-02-29

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address 5th Floor
Mariner House
62 Prince Street
Bristol
BS1 4QD

Phone 01275333701

Email info@wern.org.uk

Website www.wern.org.uk

Activities

Objects: TO PROMOTE ANY CHARITABLE PURPOSES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND (BEING AN AREA SERVED BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS OF NORTH SOMERSET, BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET, BRISTOL AND SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE, HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS THE AREA OF BENEFIT) AND IN PARTICULAR THAT OF THE RELIEF OF THOSE IN NEED, BY REASON OF YOUTH, AGE, ILL-HEALTH, DISABILITY, FINANCIAL HARDSHIP OR OTHER DISADVANTAGE, THE ADVANCEMENT OF CITIZENSHIP OR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION OR BY PURSUING ANY OTHER CHARITABLE PURPOSES.

Activities: As a specialist rural organisation we work with communities, businesses, social enterprises, groups and individuals to support and encourage community-led action. We are experienced in areas such as broadband, access to services, transport, affordable housing, fuel poverty, energy generation, village halls & community assets, health & social care, funding advice and community led planning.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Human Resources, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, Economic/community Development/employment
- **Who:** Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** THE WEST OF ENGLAND BEING THE ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS OF NORTH SOMERSET, BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET, BRISTOL AND SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE
- Bath And North East Somerset
- Bristol City
- North Somerset
- South Gloucestershire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£527,336	£577,816	£187,270	23
2024-03-31	£337,335	£406,321	-	-
2023-03-31	£405,897	£372,202	-	-
2022-03-31	£392,285	£270,584	-	-
2021-03-31	£275,198	£238,145	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Edith Whittingham		2023-12-14
Jane Wildblood		2023-12-14
Laura Penny		2019-09-12
Matthew Riddle		2024-11-13
SAMANTHA ROSS		2022-02-16

WEST OF ENGLAND RURAL NETWORK

England & Wales - Charity number 1146165

Accounts

Company no. 07956732
Charity no. 1146165

**West of England Rural Network
Report and Unaudited Financial
Statements
31 March 2025**

PO Box 1237
Bristol
BS40 8WJ

Telephone: 01275 333701
Email: info@wern.org.uk
www.wern.org.uk

The Rural Community Council for the West of England

West of England Rural Network

Reference and administrative details

For the year ended 31 March 2025

Company number	07956732	
Charity number	1146165	
Registered office	Spring Cottage The Batch Butcombe Bristol BS40 7UY	
Correspondence address	PO Box 1237 Bristol BS40 8WJ	
Trustees	Trustees, who are also directors under company law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:	
	Georgina Bigg	
	Laura Penny	
	Matthew Riddle	appointed 13 November 2024
	Samantha Ross	
	Peter Tyzack	resigned 17 June 2024
	Edith Whittingham	
	Jane Wildblood	
Executive director	Chris Head	until June 2024
	Phillip Vincent	from May 2025
Company secretary	Chris Head	resigned 17 June 2024
	Richard Whittington	appointed 17 June 2024
Bankers	Cambridge & Counties Bank Charnwood Court 5b New Walk Leicester LE1 6TE	Monmouthshire Building Society Monmouthshire House John Frost Square Newport South Wales NP20 1PX
	The Co-operative Bank PO Box 250 Delf House Skelmersdale WN8 6WT	Redwood Bank The Nexus Building Broadway Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 3TA
Independent examiners	Godfrey Wilson Limited Chartered accountants and statutory auditors 5th Floor, Mariner House 62 Prince Street Bristol BS1 4QD	

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2025

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities (effective from January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

West of England Rural Network's objects are:

To promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community in rural areas of the West of England (Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire) and in particular that of the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage, the advancement of citizenship or community development, the advancement of education or by pursuing any other charitable purposes.

West of England Rural Network's aims and intended impacts:

The aim of the West of England Rural Network is to work with communities, organisations, groups and individuals across the West of England to improve the quality of life for local communities, particularly in the rural areas, by understanding their needs, working with them towards improving services to achieve a sustainable and viable future.

The West of England Rural Network champions the goal of sustainable communities and acts as "rural and community advocate" within the area, as part of the wider family of Rural Community Councils and Local VCSE Infrastructure Organisations. Our strategic principles and aims are:

- Supporting and encouraging community-led action and strong local governance;
- Increasing long-term sustainability of local community life; and
- Influencing policies and services to achieve equity for communities, especially in rural areas.

Public benefit statement

The Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when establishing and reviewing its aims and objectives, and for planning future activities.

In line with guidance from the Charity Commission, the Trustees are satisfied that the West of England Rural Network continues to have significant charitable purpose, and delivers very tangible public benefit through its involvement in the following areas of its activities:

1. **Strategic support** - we support and advise other organisations and bodies where specialist infrastructure expertise is required in order to achieve equity for people living in rural communities;
2. **Broadband and digital** – we work with communities to provide encouragement and basic training for people who find it difficult to engage with IT and are therefore at risk of becoming increasingly disadvantaged and isolated;
3. **Access to services and community transport** – we support communities in the development of local services taking account of the many cases where access to services is limited for people without their own transport. We have supported community transport groups across the West of England, who in turn assist vulnerable and isolated individuals;
4. **Fuel poverty** - we support measures to combat and improve awareness of fuel poverty in communities which will seek to relieve those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage;

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2025

5. **Village halls and community assets** – we understand and value the importance of communities maintaining their own assets. Through the facilitation and support of communities we have assisted in proactive engagement and action planning to create sustainable assets run on a voluntary basis;
6. **Village agents** - by focusing on the needs of isolated and vulnerable people who have not in the past asked for assistance, Village Agents provide practical help for individuals at home and connect them with other organisations and services able to provide more specialist support; and
7. **Social enterprise support and funding advice** - we support community based social enterprises to become sustainable economically through the provision of business planning support, training and funding advice for projects in rural areas.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

WERN has maintained a wide portfolio of activities and has built on its active role in the voluntary and community sector throughout the West of England. Our small organisation is well networked and highly regarded by partners. We have continued to maintain and develop our role as a community focused organisation with a deep understanding of rural issues.

The key achievements in the period of this report include:

- Our Village Agent service now covers virtually all rural communities across the West of England. In Bath & North East Somerset. As well as providing support and assistance to over 1,000 potentially isolated or vulnerable people, we also helped to run a new service in B&NES supporting people in Hospitals to facilitate their return home after treatment. In North Somerset we continue to work with Curo as part of the Council's 'Community Connect' service, providing a vital link to older people in rural areas; demand continues to increase, despite our limited resources. In South Gloucestershire we completed the first full year of a new pilot Village Agent project, working closely with rural communities to provide support to a growing number of mostly older people;
- We continued to facilitate community development in North Somerset, although the three- year funding from St Monica's Trust has now come to an end. Building on the success of our 'Tea and Tech' programme we have developed a new 'Tech Ready' service providing 121 support to people looking for help with IT;
- We continued to work with the 'Power to Pill' programme, supported by Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, building positive community development at village level;
- In partnership with Voscur, we continued to convene and lead the Community Transport Network, offering Community Transports across our region a forum share common problems and develop solutions where necessary. Locally we continued to support three CT schemes at committee level;
- We also developed our interest in Public Bus services, helping to design and manage two new services in rural areas as part of the Mayoral Combined Authority's West Local programme, supported by Government's Bus Service Improvement fund. These have been a lifeline to communities largely cut off from public transport previously, and our aim now is to build passenger numbers to make them sustainable in the longer term;
- Village Halls are a vital community owned asset across the West of England. We helped Halls with a variety of issues from constitutional matters to fundraising, including helping two more Halls with successful applications to ACRE's Platinum Jubilee Village Hall fund;

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2025

- Our Community Oil Buying Scheme has 170 members and last year helped members order nearly 300,000 litres of heating oil collectively saving them more than £25,000. Building on previous years partnership with Quartet Community Foundation we were again able to offer free membership to the Community Oil Buying Scheme to people over 70; and
- We continued to work with other Voluntary Sector organisations across the area, including membership of the Steering Group of the Voluntary Sector Alliance, which works in partnership with the Integrated Care Board for Bristol North Somerset and South Gloucestershire to develop the role of VCSE organisations working in the health arena.

Details of use of volunteers

We have a limited number of 'WERN volunteers' but we support and work with volunteers in most of our activities, not least Village Halls, where a significant majority are volunteer-run. Supporting local Trustees is an important part of our role, including issues of concern such as funding and Trust structure.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial performance and going concern

In the year under review, WERN's accounts show a deficit of just over £50,000. The Trustees note that this is again largely due to funding received in advance, which under charity financial reporting rules (SORP) has to be recognised in the accounts at the time when it is awarded rather than when it is used. The Trustees are confident that WERN remains financially sound and can therefore continue to operate as a going concern.

Reserves policy

The Trustees regularly consider the reserves held by the charity and have set a target of holding at least three months expenditure in reserve. As at the end of March 2025 unrestricted reserves (excluding designated funds) amounted to £101,799 - very close to the three-month target.

The Trustees have designated an unrestricted fund of £30,000 as at the end of March 2025 to cover the costs of redundancies should such an eventuality arise.

Main sources of funding

Our funding has come from a number of sources this year, including:

- **ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England)** as part of the national Rural Community Council agreement with Dept of the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs;
- **Bath & North East Somerset Council** for Village Agents in B&NES;
- **HCRG Care Group Ltd** (formerly Virgin Care Ltd) for Village Agents in B&NES;
- **South Gloucestershire Council** for supporting a Village Agent pilot scheme, now in its third year;
- **Curo** for Village Agents in North Somerset, operating as part of Community Connect, funded by North Somerset Council;
- **Sport England (via Wesport)** for Rural Moves, providing physical exercise opportunities for older people;
- **Quartet Community Foundation** for the Community Oil buying scheme and various projects linking with our Village Agents;

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2025

- **North Somerset Council** have funded two projects as part of its Shared Prosperity Programme, funded by government:
 - **Tea and Try It**, a programme of craft and social activities encouraging older people to get involved, and
 - **Power to Pill**, a development programme aiming to support social inclusion; and
- **West of England Combined Authority** supporting our Chew Valley Community Transport volunteer car scheme.

How expenditure has supported charitable objectives

The income of West of England Rural Network is applied solely towards the fulfilment of the charitable objects.

Investment policy

Where appropriate WERN seeks to invest fund to try and ensure that value is maintained in real terms. Our general approach is to use fixed term and notice deposits rather than higher risk investments.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Main objectives for the next year

With a new Chief Executive starting in post in May, we expect to review our strategy for delivering our charitable objectives. Trustees are keen that this addresses issues that are important to rural communities.

In the short to medium term, we will continue to develop our three Village Agent programmes, including making best use of 'Charity Log', our secure CRM system. All three projects are likely to face significant funding decisions within the next eighteen months, so one of our key activities will be to ensure that monitoring and development put them in the best possible position in what is likely to be a difficult funding environment.

We will continue to focus on community infrastructure support, where we recognise the need to strengthen our support for Village Halls and Community Transport providers. As part of the wider ACRE Network, we are fortunate to be able to call on support from our fellow members, particular in supporting Village Halls.

At more strategic level, we will continue to work with local authority partners to ensure that the needs of rural communities are recognised at Local Authority and West of England level. Our work with partner **VCS infrastructure** organisations through informal networks will continue to play an important part in making sure the voice of rural communities is heard and acted upon in an area with largely urban priorities.

Looking ahead, **environmental issues** are likely to become increasingly important to our rural communities, not least in response to the new planning policies. We will aim to work with local communities, in partnership with others, to encourage initiatives that address climate change and biodiversity, while recognising issues such as the role of farming communities in food security, and the need for rural affordable housing and a just transition to net zero.

WERN will aim to work with leading local organisations to spread the word and engage communities in positive change.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2025

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Legal status, date of incorporation and date of charity registration

The organisation is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 20 February 2012 and its objects and powers are set out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The organisation was registered at the Charity Commission on 29 February 2012.

Details of governing document

The articles prohibit any distribution of funds to trustees other than for proper reimbursement of costs incurred on the company's business.

Method of recruiting and appointing new trustees

Trustees are elected to serve on WERN's Board for a term of three years. They may be re-elected for a further two terms up to nine years in line with Charity Commission guidance. Where a trustee is approaching nine years' service, further reappointment is subject to rigorous review by the Board, taking into account the value they add to the governance of WERN, and the need for progressive refreshing of membership.

The trustees have appointed a chair, and membership is open to other individuals. Trustees may appoint additional individuals who can bring specific skills to the charity. Formal induction and training for any new trustees is provided as required.

Organisational structure and decision making

West of England Rural Network is a Registered Charity and Company Limited by Guarantee. Our governing document is the Articles of Association. The trustees meet regularly to discuss the strategic direction of the charity, ensure its core aims and objects are being met in the most efficient way, and to take account of any risks to the charity and make sure all legal obligations are satisfied.

Outside these meetings, operational matters are handled by the Chief Officer and staff team.

Related parties

There are no subsidiaries or charities controlled by the same trustees. All trustees have completed a declaration of interests form so that potential related parties can be identified.

Risk statement

The trustees have considered the major risks faced by the charity and have put in place a risk register alongside systems and controls to mitigate them. Risks are regularly monitored using the risk register at trustee meetings.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2025

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

The trustees (who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the charitable company guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £10 to the assets of the charitable company in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 March 2025 was 6. The trustees are members of the charitable company but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charitable company.

Independent examiners

Godfrey Wilson Limited were re-appointed as independent examiners to the charitable company during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the trustees on 20 October 2025 and signed on their behalf by



Samantha Ross - Chair

Independent examiner's report

To the trustees of

West of England Rural Network

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of West of England Rural Network (the charitable company) for the year ended 31 March 2025, which are set out on pages 9 to 25.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charitable company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the charitable company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charitable company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charitable company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- (1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the charitable company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- (2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- (3) the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- (4) the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Dougal Howard

Date: 27 October 2025

Dougal Howard ACA

Member of the ICAEW

For and on behalf of:

Godfrey Wilson Limited

Chartered accountants and statutory auditors

5th Floor Mariner House

62 Prince Street

Bristol

BS1 4QD

West of England Rural Network

Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2025 Total £	Restated 2024 Total £
Income from:					
Donations	3	199	40,225	40,424	54,159
Charitable activities	4	391,274	86,676	477,950	274,014
Other trading activities	5	-	1,510	1,510	1,470
Investments		-	7,452	7,452	7,692
Total income		<u>391,473</u>	<u>135,863</u>	<u>527,336</u>	<u>337,335</u>
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	7,566	7,566	5,750
Charitable activities		<u>445,819</u>	<u>124,431</u>	<u>570,250</u>	<u>400,571</u>
Total expenditure	7	<u>445,819</u>	<u>131,997</u>	<u>577,816</u>	<u>406,321</u>
Net income / (expenditure) and net movement in funds	10	(54,346)	3,866	(50,480)	(68,986)
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		<u>109,817</u>	<u>127,933</u>	<u>237,750</u>	<u>306,736</u>
Total funds carried forward		<u><u>55,471</u></u>	<u><u>131,799</u></u>	<u><u>187,270</u></u>	<u><u>237,750</u></u>

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in note 17 to the accounts.

West of England Rural Network

Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2025

	Note	£	2025 £	2024 £
Current assets				
Debtors	13	30,085		3,486
Current asset investments	14	50,000		83,338
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>135,971</u>		<u>162,079</u>
		216,056		248,903
Liabilities				
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year	15	<u>(28,786)</u>		<u>(11,153)</u>
Net current assets			<u>187,270</u>	<u>237,750</u>
Net assets	16		<u>187,270</u>	<u>237,750</u>
Funds				
Restricted funds	17		55,471	109,817
Unrestricted funds				
Designated funds			30,000	40,000
General funds			<u>101,799</u>	<u>87,933</u>
Total charity funds			<u>187,270</u>	<u>237,750</u>

The directors are satisfied that the company is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) relating to the audit of the financial statements for the year by virtue of section 477(2), and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 476 of the Act.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- (i) ensuring that the company keeps proper accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act; and
- (ii) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of section 393, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

Approved by the trustees on 20 October 2025 and signed on their behalf by



Samantha Ross - Chair

West of England Rural Network

Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 March 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
Cash used in operating activities:		
Net movement in funds	(50,480)	(68,986)
Adjustments for:		
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(7,452)	(7,692)
Increase in debtors	(26,599)	(2,749)
Increase in creditors	17,633	3,309
Net cash used in operating activities	<u>(66,898)</u>	<u>(76,118)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	7,452	7,692
Net cash provided by investing activities	<u>7,452</u>	<u>7,692</u>
Decrease in cash and cash equivalents in the year	(59,446)	(68,426)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	245,417	313,843
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	<u>185,971</u>	<u>245,417</u>
Cash and cash equivalents comprise:		
Cash at bank and in hand	135,971	162,079
Current asset investments	50,000	83,338
	<u>185,971</u>	<u>245,417</u>

The charity has not provided an analysis of changes in net debt as it does not have any long term financing arrangements.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

West of England Rural Network is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales. The registered office address is Spring Cottage The Batch, Butcombe, Bristol BS40 7UY.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities in preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

West of England Rural Network meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

b) Going concern basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared on the assumption that the charity is able to continue as a going concern, which the trustees consider appropriate having regard to the current level of unrestricted reserves. There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

c) Income

Income is recognised when the charitable company has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the items of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from the government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charitable company has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

d) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charitable company; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

e) Funds accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charitable company. Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charitable company's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charitable company.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

1. Accounting policies (continued)

f) Grants payable

Grants payable are recognised as expenditure on the earlier of a) when the charity has a present obligation to transfer resources; and b) when the charity ceases to control the resource (e.g. via transferring funds to the grant recipient).

g) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

h) Allocation of support and governance costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity, including the costs of complying with constitutional and statutory requirements and any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. These costs have been allocated in full to charitable activities.

i) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

j) Current asset investments

Current asset investments consist of cash held on deposit in interest bearing accounts. Such investments are measured at their fair value.

k) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

l) Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the charitable company has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

m) Financial instruments

The charitable company only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently recognised at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

n) Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for its employees. There are no further liabilities other than that already recognised in the SoFA.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

1. Accounting policies (continued)

o) Accounting estimates and key judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

There are no key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

2. Prior period comparatives

	Restricted	Unrestricted	Restated 2024 Total
	£	£	£
Income from:			
Donations	-	54,159	54,159
Charitable activities	196,276	77,738	274,014
Other trading activities	-	1,470	1,470
Investments	-	7,692	7,692
Total income	<u>196,276</u>	<u>141,059</u>	<u>337,335</u>
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	-	5,750	5,750
Charitable activities	<u>234,243</u>	<u>166,328</u>	<u>400,571</u>
Total expenditure	<u>234,243</u>	<u>172,078</u>	<u>406,321</u>
Net expenditure	(37,967)	(31,019)	(68,986)
Transfers between funds	<u>990</u>	<u>(990)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net movement in funds	<u>(36,977)</u>	<u>(32,009)</u>	<u>(68,986)</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

3. Income from donations

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2025 Total £	Restated 2024 Total £
<i>Grants > £5,000</i>				
Action with Communities in Rural England Second Step	-	36,925	36,925	37,525
Voluntary Action North Somerset	-	-	-	6,000
Grants < £5,000	-	3,300	3,300	5,000
Other Donations	199	-	199	-
Total income from donations	199	40,225	40,424	54,159

All income from donations in the prior year was unrestricted.

Income from donations has been restated to reclassify unrestricted grant income within income from donations, and restricted grant income within income from charitable activities.

4. Income from charitable activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2025 Total £
<i>Grants > £5,000</i>			
Action with Communities in Rural England (Rural Housing)	34,020	-	34,020
BANES Council - Community Wellness Hub	18,000	-	18,000
BANES Council - Hospital Project	50,000	-	50,000
BANES Council - International Project	22,667	-	22,667
North Somerset Council	10,063	-	10,063
Pill Community Foundation	30,553	-	30,553
Quartet - Development	17,445	-	17,445
Quartet - Oil Scheme	5,000	-	5,000
South Gloucestershire Council	44,892	-	44,892
West of England Combined Authority - Rural Transport	156,384	-	156,384
Grants < £5,000	2,250	-	2,250
Chew Valley Community Transport CIC	-	5,349	5,349
Curo	-	29,237	29,237
Healthwatch North Somerset	-	800	800
Mendip Vale Medical Practice	-	250	250
Other Charitable Activity Income	-	343	343
Shopmobility South Gloucestershire	-	1,560	1,560
Virgin Care	-	49,137	49,137
Total income from charitable activities	391,274	86,676	477,950

All income from charitable activities in the current and prior year was restricted.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

4. Income from charitable activities (continued)

Prior period comparative

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Restated 2024 Total £
<i>Grants > £5,000</i>	34,413	-	34,413
Environment Agency - WEIF	15,000	-	15,000
North Somerset Council	24,000	-	24,000
Pill Community Foundation	17,980	-	17,980
Quartet - Development	18,000	-	18,000
Quartet - Oil Scheme	5,000	-	5,000
South Gloucestershire Council	74,813	-	74,813
Grants < £5,000	7,070	-	7,070
Curo	-	27,193	27,193
Mendip Vale Medical Practice	-	1,320	1,320
Shopmobility South Gloucestershire	-	1,681	1,681
HCRG	-	47,544	47,544
	<u>196,276</u>	<u>77,738</u>	<u>274,014</u>

Income from charitable activities has been restated to reclassify unrestricted grant income within income from donations, and restricted grant income within income from charitable activities.

5. Income from other trading activities

	2025 Total £	2024 Total £
Oil membership scheme	<u>1,510</u>	<u>1,470</u>

All income from other trading activities in the current and prior year was unrestricted.

6. Government grants

The charitable company receives government grants, defined as funding from Action with Communities in Rural England (ultimately from DEFRA), Bath and North East Somerset Council, The West of England Combined Authority, South Gloucestershire Council, North Somerset Council and the Environmental Agency to fund charitable activities. The total value of such grants in the period ending 31 March 2025 was £372,951 (2024: £188,271). There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies attaching to these grants in 2024/25.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

7. Total expenditure

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance £	2025 Total £
Staff costs (note 11)	7,566	267,851	27,239	302,656
Training	-	1,019	-	1,019
Printing, postage and stationery	-	1,719	-	1,719
Membership and subscriptions	-	6,644	-	6,644
Travel and subsistence	-	14,808	-	14,808
Event costs and room hire	-	1,594	-	1,594
Premises costs	-	-	1,440	1,440
Telephone costs	-	-	5,670	5,670
Computer costs	-	-	5,572	5,572
Project consultants	-	61,667	-	61,667
Project costs	-	183	-	183
Insurance	-	-	1,024	1,024
Accountancy fees	-	-	3,625	3,625
Design and promotion	-	-	96	96
Recruitment costs	-	-	3,984	3,984
Legal and professional fees	-	-	3,670	3,670
Other governance costs	-	-	80	80
Grants payable (note 8)	-	<u>162,365</u>	-	<u>162,365</u>
Sub-total	7,566	517,850	52,400	577,816
Allocation of support and governance costs	-	<u>52,400</u>	<u>(52,400)</u>	<u>-</u>
Total expenditure	<u>7,566</u>	<u>570,250</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>577,816</u>

Total governance costs were £3,260 (2024: £3,074).

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

7. Total expenditure (continued)				
Prior period comparative	Raising funds	Charitable activities	Support and governance	2024 Total
	£	£	£	£
Staff costs (note 10)	5,750	244,394	37,378	287,522
Training	-	846	-	846
Printing, postage and stationery	-	2,118	-	2,118
Membership and subscriptions	-	6,018	-	6,018
Travel and subsistence	-	14,061	-	14,061
Event costs and room hire	-	4,720	-	4,720
Premises costs	-	-	1,440	1,440
Telephone costs	-	-	5,114	5,114
Computer costs	-	-	8,800	8,800
Project consultants	-	34,621	-	34,621
Project costs	-	724	-	724
Insurance	-	-	977	977
Accountancy fees	-	-	3,462	3,462
Design and promotion	-	-	1,430	1,430
Legal and professional fees	-	-	2,813	2,813
Other governance costs	-	-	74	74
Grants payable (note 8)	-	31,581	-	31,581
Sub-total	5,750	339,083	61,488	406,321
Allocation of support and governance costs	-	61,488	(61,488)	-
Total expenditure	5,750	400,571	-	406,321

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

8. Grants payable

During the year, 18 (2024: 27) new grants were awarded to 7 institutions (2024: 6) and none to individuals (2024: 35) to help local community organisations and individuals affected by the cost of living crisis.

Total grants committed during the year were as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Grants payable to institutions:		
East Harptree Parish Council	3,406	
Freshford Parish Council	3,359	
Hawkesbury Parish Council	4,238	
The Big Lemon CIC	150,692	-
All Saints Church PCC	-	2,500
Bristol Avon River	-	7,950
Coombe Down PCC	-	4,114
Oasis Community	-	2,500
Sustainable Westbury-on-Trym	-	1,000
The Hive Community Hub	-	2,000
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	-	1,550
Others < £1,000	670	3,285
Total grants payable to institutions	162,365	24,899
Grants payable to individuals	-	6,682
	162,365	31,581

No support costs were allocated to these grants.

9. Grant commitments

	2025 £	2024 £
Grant commitments brought forward	1,620	-
Grants committed during the period	162,365	31,581
Grants paid during the period	(142,401)	(29,961)
Grant commitments carried forward	21,584	1,620

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

10. Net movement in funds

This is stated after charging:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trustees' remuneration	Nil	Nil
Trustees' reimbursed expenses	Nil	Nil
Independent examiner's fees (excluding VAT):		
▪ Independent examination	<u>2,650</u>	<u>2,500</u>

11. Staff costs and numbers

Staff costs were as follows:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Salaries and wages	290,446	275,622
Social security costs	8,394	7,932
Pension costs	<u>3,816</u>	<u>3,968</u>
	<u>302,656</u>	<u>287,522</u>

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the current or prior year.

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the Executive Director. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £35,354 (2024: £41,932).

	2025	2024
	No.	No.
Average head count	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>

12. Taxation

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

13. Debtors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Accrued income	30,028	320
Other debtors	<u>57</u>	<u>3,166</u>
	<u>30,085</u>	<u>3,486</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

14. Current asset investments

	2025	2024
	£	£
Short term deposits	<u>50,000</u>	<u>83,338</u>

15. Creditors : amounts due within 1 year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade creditors	-	1,283
Accruals	5,721	7,543
Other creditors	1,481	707
Grant commitments (note 9)	<u>21,584</u>	<u>1,620</u>
	<u>28,786</u>	<u>11,153</u>

16. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	General funds £	Total funds £
Current assets	77,055	30,000	109,001	216,056
Current liabilities	<u>(21,584)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(7,202)</u>	<u>(28,786)</u>
Net assets at 31 March 2025	<u>55,471</u>	<u>30,000</u>	<u>101,799</u>	<u>187,270</u>
Prior period comparative	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	General funds £	Total funds £
Current assets	113,911	40,000	94,992	248,903
Current liabilities	<u>(4,094)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(7,059)</u>	<u>(11,153)</u>
Net assets at 31 March 2024	<u>109,817</u>	<u>40,000</u>	<u>87,933</u>	<u>237,750</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

17. Movements in funds

	At 1 April 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2025 £
Restricted funds					
Chew Valley Community CIC	19,011	-	-	-	19,011
St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact	16,934	-	(16,934)	-	-
ACRE - Rural Housing Enabler	28,446	34,020	(62,466)	-	-
Quartet - Bath Half Marathon	338	2,000	(1,917)	-	421
Quartet - Community Wellness	784	-	(270)	-	514
Quartet - Oil Scheme	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
Quartet - Business Development	-	17,445	(8,305)	-	9,140
Cam Valley Rotary Club	-	250	(250)	-	-
B&NES Council - Community Wellbeing Hub	-	18,000	(18,000)	-	-
B&NES Council - Hospital	13,042	50,000	(51,207)	-	11,835
B&NES Council - International	-	22,667	(16,101)	-	6,566
WECA - Rural Transport	-	156,384	(156,384)	-	-
North Somerset Council - Tech Ready	-	10,063	(9,387)	-	676
Shared Prosperity Fund - Pill	-	30,553	(29,498)	-	1,055
Donations - Oil Scheme	-	40	(40)	-	-
Donations - Cycling	-	159	(159)	-	-
South Gloucestershire Village Agents	<u>31,262</u>	<u>44,892</u>	<u>(69,901)</u>	-	<u>6,253</u>
Total restricted funds	<u>109,817</u>	<u>391,473</u>	<u>(445,819)</u>	-	<u>55,471</u>
Unrestricted funds					
<i>Designated funds:</i>					
Closing down reserve	<u>40,000</u>	-	-	(10,000)	<u>30,000</u>
<i>Total designated funds</i>	<u>40,000</u>	-	-	(10,000)	<u>30,000</u>
General funds	<u>87,933</u>	<u>135,863</u>	<u>(131,997)</u>	10,000	<u>101,799</u>
Total unrestricted funds	<u>127,933</u>	<u>135,863</u>	<u>(131,997)</u>	-	<u>131,799</u>
Total funds	<u>237,750</u>	<u>527,336</u>	<u>(577,816)</u>	-	<u>187,270</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

17. Movements in funds (continued)

Prior period comparative

	At 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2024 £
Restricted funds					
Chew Valley Community CIC	19,011	-	-	-	19,011
St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact	46,089	-	(29,155)	-	16,934
ACRE - Rural Housing Enabler	-	34,413	(5,967)	-	28,446
Quartet - Wessex	3,000	-	(3,000)	-	-
Quartet - North Somerset Community Partnership	12,620	-	(12,620)	-	-
Quartet - Bath Half Marathon	-	2,000	(1,662)	-	338
Quartet - Community Wellness	2,000	-	(1,216)	-	784
Quartet - Oil Scheme	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
Quartet - Catalyst Project 1	-	18,000	(18,000)	-	-
Quartet - Catalyst Project 2	-	2,000	(2,000)	-	-
Wesport - Rural Moves	2,107	550	(2,657)	-	-
B&NES Council - Community Development	17,723	-	(17,723)	-	-
B&NES Council - Hospital	38,977	-	(25,935)	-	13,042
WECA - Rural Transport	-	2,520	(2,520)	-	-
Shared Prosperity Fund - North Somerset	-	24,000	(24,000)	-	-
Shared Prosperity Fund - Pill	-	17,980	(18,970)	990	-
EA - Water Environment Improvement Fund	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	-
South Gloucestershire Village Agents	5,267	74,813	(48,818)	-	31,262
Total restricted funds	146,794	196,276	(234,243)	990	109,817
Unrestricted funds					
<i>Designated funds:</i>					
B&NES	41,295	-	(41,295)	-	-
Closing down reserve	40,000	-	-	-	40,000
<i>Total designated funds</i>	81,295	-	(41,295)	-	40,000
General funds	78,647	141,059	(130,783)	(990)	87,933
Total unrestricted funds	159,942	141,059	(172,078)	(990)	127,933
Total funds	306,736	337,335	(406,321)	-	237,750

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

17. Movements in funds (continued)

Purposes of restricted funds

Chew Valley Community CIC

Funding from Chew Valley Community CIC is held for the development of community transport services in the Chew Valley and surrounding area.

St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact

Funding for a programme of community development targeted at people aged 50+ in the Woodspring area of North Somerset.

ACRE - Rural housing enabler

Funding from Defra to establish a rural housing enabler function, to work with communities to establish a need for rural housing and then undertake the necessary work to enable a scheme to come forward.

Quartet - Bath Half Marathon

Funding for the 'Rural Moves' programme in B&NES - gentle exercise for people with mobility problems.

Quartet - Community wellness

Funding for new community activity that helps to support health and wellbeing across rural B&NES.

Quartet - Oil Scheme

Funding to support WERN's community oil buying scheme, providing discretionary free membership to people aged 70+, and keeping in touch with isolated older people.

Quartet - Business Development

Funding to enable WERN to carry out a needs assessment survey across all rural communities, and to develop a major community development programme.

Cam Rotary Club

A grant to support community activity in the Cam Valley area.

B&NES Council - Community Wellbeing Hub

Funding from B&NES Council to support the Village Agent service in B&NES project.

B&NES Council - Hospital

A project to increase the through-flow of patients in B&NES hospitals, linking discharge teams with Community Wellbeing Hub partner organisations. WERN Village Agents are supporting the development of this new project.

B&NES Council - International

Funding from B&NES Council to support the expansion of the Village Agent project.

WECA - Rural Transport

Funding to support provision of community transport in Chew Valley.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

17. Movements in funds (continued)

Purposes of restricted funds (continued)

North Somerset Council - Tech Ready

A programme of support and encouragement for people struggling with IT.

Shared Prosperity Fund - Pill

Government funding to enable further development of community engagement in partnership with Pill Community Foundation.

Donations - Oil Scheme

Contributions by oil members.

Donations - Cycling

Contributions from individuals to the cost of cycling courses in the Chew Valley.

South Gloucestershire Village Agents

Funding to extend the Village Agents scheme across South Gloucestershire.

Purposes of designated funds

Closing down reserve

A reserve to cover potential winding up costs, in the event the charity were to cease operations.

18. Related parties

Chris Head, Executive Director until June 2024, Richard Whittington, WERN Rural Services Consultant, and Denise Perrin, Project Manager for WERN, are Directors of Chew Valley Community Transport CIC. WERN works in partnership with the CIC to deliver its community transport program, funded by WECA. In the year the charity received £5,349 of income from Chew Valley Community Transport CIC (2024: £Nil). There were no amounts outstanding at the year end (2024: £nil).

WEST OF ENGLAND RURAL NETWORK

England & Wales - Charity number 1146165

Accounts

Company no. 07956732
Charity no. 1146165

West of England Rural Network
Report and Unaudited Financial
Statements
31 March 2024

PO Box 1237
Bristol
BS40 8WJ

Telephone: 01275 333701
Email: info@wern.org.uk
www.wern.org.uk

The Rural Community Council for the West of England

West of England Rural Network

Reference and administrative details

For the year ended 31 March 2024

Company number	07956732	
Charity number	1146165	
Registered office	5th Floor, Mariner House 62 Prince Street Bristol BS1 4QD	
Correspondence address	PO Box 1237 Bristol BS40 8WJ	
Trustees	Trustees, who are also directors under company law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows: Georgina Bigg Laura Penny Samantha Ross Frances Tyson Peter Tyzack Edith Whittingham Jane Wildblood	
	resigned 30 July 2023	
	appointed 14 December 2023	
	appointed 14 December 2023	
Executive director	Chris Head	until June 2024
Company secretary	Chris Head Richard Whittington	resigned 17 June 2024 appointed 17 June 2024
Bankers	Cambridge & Counties Bank Charnwood Court 5b New Walk Leicester LE1 6TE	Monmouthshire Building Society Monmouthshire House John Frost Square Newport South Wales NP20 1PX
	The Co-operative Bank PO Box 250 Delf House Skelmersdale WN8 6WT	Redwood Bank The Nexus Building Broadway Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 3TA
Independent examiners	Godfrey Wilson Limited Chartered accountants and statutory auditors 5th Floor, Mariner House 62 Prince Street Bristol BS1 4QD	

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2024

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities (effective from January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

West of England Rural Network's objects are:

To promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community in the West of England (being areas of North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire) and in particular that of the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage, the advancement of citizenship or community development, the advancement of education or by pursuing any other charitable purposes.

West of England Rural Network's aims and intended impacts:

The aim of the West of England Rural Network is to work with communities, organisations, groups and individuals across the West of England to improve the quality of life for local communities, particularly in the rural areas, by understanding their needs, working with them towards improving services to achieve a sustainable and viable future.

The West of England Rural Network champions the goal of sustainable communities, and acts as "rural and community advocate" within the area, as part of the wider family of Rural Community Councils and Local VCSE Infrastructure Organisations. Our strategic principles and aims are:

- Supporting and encouraging community-led action and strong local governance;
- Increasing long-term sustainability of local community life; and
- Influencing policies and services to achieve equity for communities, especially in rural areas.

Public benefit statement

The trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when establishing and reviewing its aims and objectives, and for planning future activities.

In line with guidance from the Charity Commission, the trustees are satisfied that the West of England Rural Network continues to have significant charitable purpose, and delivers very tangible public benefit through its involvement in the following areas of its activities:

1. **Strategic support** - we have supported, influenced and informed other organisations and bodies where specialist infrastructure expertise is required in order to achieve equity for people living in rural communities;
2. **Broadband and digital** – our focus is working with communities to provide encouragement and basic training for people who find it difficult to engage with IT and are therefore at risk of becoming increasingly disadvantaged and isolated;
3. **Access to services and community transport** – we continue to support communities in the development of local services and to identify and analyse access to local services. We have supported community transport groups across the West of England, who in turn assist vulnerable and isolated individuals;
4. **Fuel poverty** - we support measures to combat and improve awareness of fuel poverty in communities which will seek to relieve those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage;

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2024

5. **Village halls and community assets** – we understand and value the importance to communities of their own assets. Through the facilitation and support of communities we have assisted in proactive engagement and action planning to create sustainable communities, helping them maintain and run these assets on a voluntary basis;
6. **Village agents** - by focusing on the needs of isolated and vulnerable people who have not in the past asked for assistance, the Village Agents have identified and linked people with organisations and services who are able to support and help; and
7. **Social enterprise support and funding advice** - through providing business planning support, training and funding advice for projects in rural areas, we support community based social enterprises to become sustainable economically.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

WERN has maintained a wide portfolio of activities and has built on its active role in the voluntary and community sector throughout the West of England. Our small organisation is well networked and highly regarded by partners. We have continued to maintain and develop our role as a community focused organisation with a deep understanding of rural issues.

Partnership and collaboration

We work both formally and informally with other VCSE organisations across the West of England to increase our reach and delivery for the benefit of all our communities.

Working with communities

Our aim of supporting, facilitating and encouraging community led action and strong local governance is key to our organisational purpose. Over the years we have been able to support communities to find, create and deliver their own solutions through information, advice and guidance. We use an asset-based community development approach, building on what works well to ensure solutions are sustainable.

Volunteering

We support community organisations that rely on volunteers to make them work - such as village halls, community shops and community transport schemes.

The key achievements in the period of this report include:

- Our Village Agents in Bath and North East Somerset now serve the whole rural area, the towns of Midsomer Norton and Radstock, and parts of Bath. The project is jointly funded by HCRG Care Group as part of the adult social care commission with B&NES Council;
- The Rural Moves project provided opportunity for contact and support with the older isolated people in the Chew and Somer Valleys in the rural part of Bath & North East Somerset who had been participants in the Rural Links programme to increase their mobility and activity levels. We are grateful to Wesport and Quartet for their support;
- Working with Curo, our Village Agents operating across rural North Somerset as part of the district wide Community Connect project continued to provide a critical link for rurally isolated and vulnerable older people, and demand for their services continues to increase;
- We continued to facilitate community development in North Somerset, supported by three- year funding from St Monica's Trust. We were able to continue our successful 'Tea and Tech' programme thanks to funding from North Somerset Community Partnership and Wessex Water in conjunction with Quartet Community Foundation;

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2024

- We also helped to run two programmes in North Somerset through Government's 'Shared Prosperity Fund' – one working across the county to develop social activities such as craft and cookery classes encouraging greater participation and involvement, and one under the 'Power to Pill' banner working to encourage positive community development at village level;
- In partnership with South Gloucestershire Council we continued to develop our Village Agent service in the more rural part of the authority, working with the community at 'hyper-local' level through four area based 'Steering Groups';
- In partnership with Voscur, we continued to convene and lead the Community Transport Network, providing groups to share common problems and develop solutions where necessary. Locally we continued to support three CT schemes at committee level;
- Village halls are a vital community owned asset across the West of England. We helped halls with a variety of issues from constitutional matters to fundraising, including helping three halls apply to ACRE's Platinum Jubilee Village Hall fund;
- Our Community Oil Buying Scheme has 170 members and last year helped members order nearly 300,000 litres of heating oil collectively saving them some £25,000. Building on previous years' partnership with Quartet Community Foundation we were again able to offer free membership to the Community Oil Buying Scheme to people over 70; and
- We continued to work with our voluntary sector infrastructure partners under the umbrella of the West of England Civil Society Partnership, building a strong relationship with the Bristol, North Somerset South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board, including the creation of the 'volunteer Alliance' – helping a wide range of VCSE organisations work with the NHS locally. We continued to lead on VCSE engagement at a system level for the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care System. This has helped us to raise the profile of rural issues, which can otherwise get lost in a largely urban-focused system.

Details of use of volunteers

Most of the activities and projects we are involved in are run by, and/or supported by volunteers. We have a limited number of 'WERN volunteers' but we support and work with volunteers in most of our activities, not least village halls, where a significant majority are volunteer-run. Supporting local trustees is an important part of our work programme.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial performance and going concern

In the year under review, WERN's accounts show a deficit of nearly £69,000. The trustees have noted that this is substantially due to the amount of funding received in advance in previous years, if this had been shown on a matching basis the outcome would have been a small surplus. Under charity financial reporting rules (the SORP) such income has to be recognised in the accounts when it is awarded. Taking a longer view, the trustees are confident that WERN remains financially sound, and can therefore continue to operate as a going concern.

Reserves policy

The trustees regularly consider the reserves held by the charity and have set a target of holding three months' expenditure in reserve. As at the end of March 2024 unrestricted reserves amounted to £87,933 - very close to the three-month target.

The trustees designated an unrestricted fund of £40,000 at the end of March 2023 to cover the costs of closing down if required.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2024

Main sources of funding

Our funding has come from a number of sources this year, including:

- ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) as part of the national Rural Community Council agreement with Dept of the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs;
- Bath & North East Somerset Council for Village Agents in B&NES;
- HCRG Care Group Ltd (formerly Virgin Care Ltd) for Village Agents in B&NES;
- South Gloucestershire Council for supporting a Village Agent pilot scheme, now in its second year;
- Curo for Village Agents in North Somerset, operating as part of Community Connect, funded by North Somerset Council;
- Sport England (via Wesport) for Rural Moves, providing physical exercise opportunities for older people;
- Quartet Community Foundation for the Community Oil buying scheme and various projects linking with our Village Agents;
- North Somerset Council have funded two projects as part of its Shared Prosperity Programme, funded by government:
 - 'Tea and Try It', a programme of craft and social activities encouraging older people to get involved, and
 - 'Power to Pill', a development programme aiming to support social inclusion; and
- West of England Combined Authority supporting our Chew Valley Community Transport volunteer car scheme.

How expenditure has supported charitable objectives

The income of West of England Rural Network is applied solely towards the fulfilment of the charitable objects.

Investment policy

Where appropriate WERN seeks to invest funds to try and ensure that value is maintained in real terms. Our general approach is to use fixed term and notice deposits rather than higher risk investments.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Main objectives for the next year

We will continue to develop our three Village Agent programmes, including making best use of 'Charity Log', our secure CRM system. All three projects are likely to face significant funding decisions within the next eighteen months, so one of our key activities will be to ensure that monitoring and development put them in the best possible position in what is likely to be a difficult funding environment.

We will continue to focus on community infrastructure support, where we recognise the need to strengthen our support for Village Halls and Community Transport providers. As part of the wider ACRE Network, we are fortunate to be able to call on support from our fellow members, particular in supporting Village Halls.

At more strategic level, we will continue to work with local authority partners to ensure that the needs of rural communities are recognised at Local Authority and West of England level. Our work with partner VCS infrastructure organisations through informal networks will continue to play an important part in making sure the voice of rural communities is heard and acted upon in an area with largely urban priorities.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2024

Looking ahead, environmental issues are likely to become increasingly important to our rural communities, not least in response to the new planning policies. We will aim to work with local communities, in partnership with others, to encourage initiatives that address climate change and biodiversity, while recognising issues such as the role of farming communities in food security, and the need for rural affordable housing and a just transition to net zero.

WERN will aim to work with leading local organisations to spread the word and engage communities in positive change.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Legal status, date of incorporation and date of charity registration

The organisation is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 20 February 2012 and its objects and powers are set out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The organisation was registered at the Charity Commission on 29 February 2012.

Details of governing document

The articles prohibit any distribution of funds to trustees other than for proper reimbursement of costs incurred on the company's business.

Method of recruiting and appointing new trustees

In accordance with the articles at the first annual general meeting all the trustees retired and stood for re-appointment. At each subsequent annual general meeting one third of the trustees must retire from office. Under a bye law adopted by the board in December 2018, trustees can only serve for three years and must then retire. They may stand for re-election for up to a third term but are not eligible for subsequent re-election thereafter.

The trustees have appointed a chair, and membership is open to other individuals. Trustees may appoint additional individuals who can bring specific skills to the charity. Formal induction and training for any new trustees is provided as required.

Organisational structure and decision making

West of England Rural Network is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Our governing document is the Articles of Association. The trustees meet regularly to discuss the strategic direction of the charity, ensure its core aims and objects are being met in the most efficient way, and to take account of any risks to the charity and make sure all legal obligations are satisfied.

Outside these meetings, operational matters are handled by the executive director and staff team.

Related parties

There are no subsidiaries or charities controlled by the same trustees. All trustees have completed a declaration of interests form so that potential related parties can be identified.

Risk statement

The trustees have considered the major risks faced by the charity and have put in place a risk register alongside systems and controls to mitigate them. Risks are regularly monitored using the risk register at trustee meetings.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2024

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

The trustees (who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the charitable company guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £10 to the assets of the charitable company in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 March 2024 was 6. The trustees are members of the charitable company but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charitable company.

Independent examiners

Godfrey Wilson Limited were re-appointed as independent examiners to the charitable company during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the trustees on 2 September 2024 and signed on their behalf by



Samantha Ross - Chair

Independent examiner's report

To the members of

West of England Rural Network

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of West of England Rural Network (the charitable company) for the year ended 31 March 2024, which are set out on pages 9 to 25.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charitable company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the charitable company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charitable company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charitable company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), which is one of the listed bodies.

Godfrey Wilson Limited also provides payroll bureau services to the charitable company. I confirm that as a member of the ICAEW I am subject to the FRC's Revised Ethical Standard 2016, which I have applied with respect to this engagement.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- (1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the charitable company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- (2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- (3) the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- (4) the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Rob Wilson

Date: 2 September 2024

Robert Wilson FCA, member of the ICAEW

For and on behalf of:

Godfrey Wilson Limited

Chartered accountants and statutory auditors

5th Floor, Mariner House

62 Prince Street

Bristol, BS1 4QD

West of England Rural Network

Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Income from:					
Donations	3	196,276	-	196,276	241,164
Charitable activities	4	-	131,897	131,897	160,631
Other trading activities	5	-	1,470	1,470	1,470
Investments		-	7,692	7,692	2,632
Total income		<u>196,276</u>	<u>141,059</u>	<u>337,335</u>	<u>405,897</u>
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	5,750	5,750	2,833
Charitable activities		<u>234,243</u>	<u>166,328</u>	<u>400,571</u>	<u>369,369</u>
Total expenditure	7	<u>234,243</u>	<u>172,078</u>	<u>406,321</u>	<u>372,202</u>
Net income / (expenditure)		(37,967)	(31,019)	(68,986)	33,695
Transfers between funds		<u>990</u>	<u>(990)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net movement in funds	9	(36,977)	(32,009)	(68,986)	33,695
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		<u>146,794</u>	<u>159,942</u>	<u>306,736</u>	<u>273,041</u>
Total funds carried forward		<u>109,817</u>	<u>127,933</u>	<u>237,750</u>	<u>306,736</u>

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in note 15 to the accounts.

West of England Rural Network

Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2024

	Note	£	2024 £	2023 £
Current assets				
Debtors	12	3,486		737
Cash at bank and in hand		162,079		233,843
Current asset investments		<u>83,338</u>		<u>80,000</u>
		248,903		314,580
Liabilities				
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year	13	<u>(11,153)</u>		<u>(7,844)</u>
Net current assets			<u>237,750</u>	<u>306,736</u>
Net assets	14		<u>237,750</u>	<u>306,736</u>
Funds				
Restricted funds	15		109,817	146,794
Unrestricted funds				
Designated funds			40,000	81,295
General funds			<u>87,933</u>	<u>78,647</u>
Total charity funds			<u>237,750</u>	<u>306,736</u>

The directors are satisfied that the company is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) relating to the audit of the financial statements for the year by virtue of section 477(2), and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 476 of the Act.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- (i) ensuring that the company keeps proper accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act; and
- (ii) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of section 393, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

Approved by the trustees on 2 September 2024 and signed on their behalf by



Samantha Ross - Chair

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

West of England Rural Network is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales. The registered office address is 5th floor, Mariner House, 62 Prince Street, Bristol, BS1 4QD.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities in preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

West of England Rural Network meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

b) Going concern basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared on the assumption that the charity is able to continue as a going concern, which the trustees consider appropriate having regard to the current level of unrestricted reserves. There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

c) Conduit funding

The charity does not include income and expenditure in the SOFA for project partners for whom they act as agent by collecting donations and passing them on. The amount of such income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024 was £nil (2023: £1,000).

d) Income

Income is recognised when the charitable company has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the items of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from the government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charitable company has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

e) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charitable company; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

f) Funds accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charitable company. Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charitable company's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charitable company.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

g) Grants payable

Grants payable are recognised as expenditure on the earlier of a) when the charity has a present obligation to transfer resources; and b) when the charity ceases to control the resource (e.g. via transferring funds to the grant recipient).

h) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

i) Allocation of support and governance costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity, including the costs of complying with constitutional and statutory requirements and any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. These costs have been allocated in full to charitable activities.

j) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

k) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

l) Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the charitable company has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

m) Financial instruments

The charitable company only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently recognised at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

n) Current asset investments

Current asset investments consist of cash held on deposit in interest bearing accounts. Such investments are measured at their fair value.

o) Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for its employees. There are no further liabilities other than that already recognised in the SOFA.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

p) Accounting estimates and key judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

There are no key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

2. Prior period comparatives

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2023 Total
	£	£	£
Income from:			
Donations	239,204	1,960	241,164
Charitable activities	-	160,631	160,631
Other trading activities	-	1,470	1,470
Investments	-	2,632	2,632
Total income	239,204	166,693	405,897
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	-	2,833	2,833
Charitable activities	199,641	169,728	369,369
Total expenditure	199,641	172,561	372,202
Net income / (expenditure) and net movement in funds	39,563	(5,868)	33,695

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

3. Income from donations

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Grants > £5,000				
Action with Communities in Rural England	34,413	-	34,413	-
BANES Council - Hospital Project	-	-	-	44,400
BANES Council - Community Development	-	-	-	30,252
BANES Council - Miicare	-	-	-	5,000
Environment Agency - WEIF	15,000	-	15,000	15,000
North Somerset Council	24,000	-	24,000	62,538
Pill Community Foundation	17,980	-	17,980	-
Quartet - Catalyst Project 1	18,000	-	18,000	-
Quartet - North Somerset Community Partnership (Digital)	-	-	-	15,000
Quartet - Oil Scheme	5,000	-	5,000	4,190
South Gloucestershire Council	74,813	-	74,813	14,963
St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community	-	-	-	30,000
Grants < £5,000				
BANES Council - Ukraine Support	-	-	-	3,855
Chew Valley Community CIC	-	-	-	156
Quartet - Bath Half Marathon	2,000	-	2,000	-
Quartet - Catalyst Project 2	2,000	-	2,000	-
Quartet - Community Wellness	-	-	-	2,000
Quartet - Wessex North Somerset Digital Programme	-	-	-	3,000
St Monica Trust - Coronation Events	-	-	-	500
Wesport - Rural Moves	550	-	550	5,000
West of England Civil Society Partnership	-	-	-	1,960
West of England Combined Authority - Community Transport	2,520	-	2,520	2,750
Westfield Parish Council - Community Support	-	-	-	600
Total income from donations	<u>196,276</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>196,276</u>	<u>241,164</u>

Income from donations in the prior period contained £1,960 of unrestricted donations from West of England Civil Society Partnership, all other income from donations was restricted.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

4. Income from charitable activities

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2024 Total	2023 Total
	£	£	£	£
Action with Communities in Rural England	-	37,525	37,525	36,325
BANES Council	-	-	-	28,000
Curo	-	27,193	27,193	25,307
Creativity Works	-	2,234	2,234	-
Mendip Vale medical practice	-	1,320	1,320	-
National Association for Voluntary and Community Action	-	-	-	1,000
Second Step	-	6,000	6,000	-
Shopmobility South Gloucestershire	-	1,681	1,681	1,615
Southmead Development Trust	-	-	-	2,000
Virgin Care	-	47,544	47,544	51,547
Voluntary Action North Somerset	-	5,000	5,000	-
Voscur	-	3,325	3,325	-
Wesport	-	75	75	-
West of England Combined Authority	-	-	-	14,837
Total income from charitable activities	-	131,897	131,897	160,631

All income from charitable activities in the prior year was unrestricted.

5. Income from other trading activities

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2024 Total	2023 Total
	£	£	£	£
Oil membership scheme	-	1,470	1,470	1,470

All income from other trading activities in the prior year was unrestricted.

6. Government grants

The charitable company receives government grants, defined as funding from Action with Communities in Rural England (ultimately from DEFRA), Bath and North East Somerset Council, North Somerset Council, Westfield Parish Council, the West of England Combined Authority, South Gloucestershire Council and the Environmental Agency to fund charitable activities. The total value of such grants in the period ending 31 March 2024 was £188,271 (2023: £245,482). There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies attaching to these grants in 2023/24.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

7. Total expenditure

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance £	2024 Total £
Staff costs (note 10)	5,750	244,394	37,378	287,522
Training	-	846	-	846
Printing, postage and stationery	-	2,118	-	2,118
Membership and subscriptions	-	6,018	-	6,018
Travel and subsistence	-	14,061	-	14,061
Event costs and room hire	-	4,720	-	4,720
Premises costs	-	-	1,440	1,440
Telephone costs	-	-	5,114	5,114
Computer costs	-	-	8,800	8,800
Project consultants	-	34,621	-	34,621
Project costs	-	724	-	724
Insurance	-	-	977	977
Accountancy fees	-	-	3,462	3,462
Design and promotion	-	-	1,430	1,430
Legal and professional fees	-	-	2,813	2,813
Governance costs	-	-	74	74
Grants payable (note 8)	-	31,581	-	31,581
Sub-total	5,750	339,083	61,488	406,321
Allocation of support and governance costs	-	61,488	(61,488)	-
Total expenditure	5,750	400,571	-	406,321

Total governance costs were £3,074 (2023: £2,859).

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

7. Total expenditure (continued)

Prior period comparative	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance £	2023 Total £
Staff costs (note 10)	2,833	214,360	8,266	225,459
Training	-	789	-	789
Printing, postage and stationery	-	2,244	-	2,244
Membership and subscriptions	-	6,652	-	6,652
Travel and subsistence	-	10,328	-	10,328
Event costs and room hire	-	7,453	-	7,453
Premises costs	-	-	1,440	1,440
Telephone costs	-	-	4,711	4,711
Computer costs	-	-	9,007	9,007
Project consultants	-	57,785	-	57,785
Project costs	-	365	-	365
Insurance	-	-	952	952
Accountancy fees	-	-	5,076	5,076
Design and promotion	-	-	1,155	1,155
Legal and professional fees	-	-	2,425	2,425
Miscellaneous costs	-	-	298	298
Governance costs	-	-	39	39
Grants payable (note 8)	-	36,024	-	36,024
Sub-total	2,833	336,000	33,369	372,202
Allocation of support and governance costs	-	33,369	(33,369)	-
Total expenditure	<u>2,833</u>	<u>369,369</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>372,202</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

8. Grants payable

During the year, 27 (2023: 17) new grants were awarded to 14 institutions (2023: 16) and 35 to individuals (2023: nil) to help local community organisations and individuals affected by the cost of living crisis.

Total grants committed during the year were as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Grants payable to institutions:		
Bristol Avon River	7,950	10,088
Coombe Down PCC	4,114	-
All Saints Church PCC	2,500	-
Oasis Community	2,500	-
The Hive Community Hub	2,000	-
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	1,550	-
Sustainable Westbury-on-Trym	1,000	-
Flax Bourton Parish Council	-	4,890
Blagdon Village Club	-	3,919
Long Ashton Community Centre	-	1,146
Portishead Youth Centre	-	1,700
Yate Town Council	-	1,300
Flax Bourton Baby	-	2,090
Coaching for All	-	6,000
Others < £1,000	<u>3,285</u>	<u>4,890</u>
Total grants payable to institutions	24,899	36,024
Grants payable to individuals	<u>6,682</u>	-
	<u>31,581</u>	<u>36,024</u>

No support costs were allocated to these grants.

9. Net movement in funds

This is stated after charging:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trustees' remuneration	Nil	Nil
Trustees' reimbursed expenses	Nil	Nil
Independent examiner's fees (excluding VAT):		
▪ Independent examination	2,500	2,350
▪ Other services	<u>126</u>	<u>2,139</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

10. Staff costs and numbers

Staff costs were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Salaries and wages	275,622	213,517
Social security costs	7,932	6,681
Pension costs	3,968	5,261
	<u>287,522</u>	<u>225,459</u>

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the year.

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the Executive Director. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £41,932 (2023: £40,279).

	2024 No.	2023 No.
Average head count	<u>24</u>	<u>20</u>

11. Taxation

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

12. Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Accrued income	320	737
Other debtors	3,166	-
	<u>3,486</u>	<u>737</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

13. Creditors : amounts due within 1 year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	1,283	2,031
Accruals	7,543	5,025
Other creditors	707	788
Grant commitments	1,620	-
	<u>11,153</u>	<u>7,844</u>

14. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	General funds £	Total funds £
Current assets	113,911	40,000	94,992	248,903
Current liabilities	<u>(4,094)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(7,059)</u>	<u>(11,153)</u>
Net assets at 31 March 2024	<u>109,817</u>	<u>40,000</u>	<u>87,933</u>	<u>237,750</u>
Prior period comparative	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	General funds £	Total funds £
Current assets	146,794	81,295	86,491	314,580
Current liabilities	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(7,844)</u>	<u>(7,844)</u>
Net assets at 31 March 2023	<u>146,794</u>	<u>81,295</u>	<u>78,647</u>	<u>306,736</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

15. Movements in funds

	At 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2024 £
Restricted funds					
Chew Valley Community CIC	19,011	-	-	-	19,011
St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact	46,089	-	(29,155)	-	16,934
ACRE - Rural Housing Enabler Quartet - Wessex	-	34,413	(5,967)	-	28,446
Quartet - North Somerset Community Partnership	3,000	-	(3,000)	-	-
Quartet - Bath Half Marathon	12,620	-	(12,620)	-	-
Quartet - Community Wellness	-	2,000	(1,662)	-	338
Quartet - Oil Scheme	2,000	-	(1,216)	-	784
Quartet - Catalyst Project 1	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
Quartet - Catalyst Project 2	-	18,000	(18,000)	-	-
Wesport - Rural Moves	-	2,000	(2,000)	-	-
B&NES Council - Community Development	2,107	550	(2,657)	-	-
B&NES Council - Hospital	17,723	-	(17,723)	-	-
WECA - Community Transport Shared Prosperity Fund - North Somerset	38,977	-	(25,935)	-	13,042
Shared Prosperity Fund - Pill EA - Water Environment Improvement Fund	-	2,520	(2,520)	-	-
South Gloucestershire Village Agents	-	24,000	(24,000)	-	-
	-	17,980	(18,970)	990	-
	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	-
	5,267	74,813	(48,818)	-	31,262
Total restricted funds	146,794	196,276	(234,243)	990	109,817
Unrestricted funds					
<i>Designated funds:</i>					
B&NES	41,295	-	(41,295)	-	-
Closing down reserve	40,000	-	-	-	40,000
<i>Total designated funds</i>	81,295	-	(41,295)	-	40,000
General funds	78,647	141,059	(130,783)	(990)	87,933
Total unrestricted funds	159,942	141,059	(172,078)	(990)	127,933
Total funds	306,736	337,335	(406,321)	-	237,750

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

15. Movements in funds (continued)

Prior period comparative	At 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2023 £
Restricted funds					
North Somerset - Community Hub	35,564	62,538	(98,102)	-	-
Chew Valley Community CIC	19,198	156	(343)	-	19,011
St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact	43,412	30,000	(27,323)	-	46,089
St Monica Trust - Rural Links	536	-	(536)	-	-
St Monica Trust - Coronation	-	500	(500)	-	-
Virgin Care - Digital Healthcare	7,000	-	(7,000)	-	-
Quartet - Wessex	-	3,000	-	-	3,000
Quartet - North Somerset Community Partnership	-	15,000	(2,380)	-	12,620
Quartet - Rural Links	187	-	(187)	-	-
Quartet - Bath Half Marathon	884	-	(884)	-	-
Quartet - Community Wellness	-	2,000	-	-	2,000
Quartet - Oil Scheme	-	4,190	(4,190)	-	-
Wesport - Rural Moves	-	5,000	(2,893)	-	2,107
B&NES Council - Community Development	-	30,252	(12,529)	-	17,723
B&NES Council - Miicare	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
B&NES Council - Community Transport (Ukraine)	-	54	(54)	-	-
B&NES Council - Hospital	-	44,400	(5,423)	-	38,977
B&NES Council - Ukraine	-	3,801	(3,801)	-	-
WECA - Community Transport	-	2,750	(2,750)	-	-
Westfield Parish Council - Community Support	-	600	(600)	-	-
Avon & Somerset Police Commissioner	450	-	(450)	-	-
EA - Water Environment Improvement Fund	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	-
South Gloucestershire Village Agents	-	14,963	(9,696)	-	5,267
Total restricted funds	107,231	239,204	(199,641)	-	146,794
Unrestricted funds					
<i>Designated funds:</i>					
B&NES	70,000	-	(28,705)	-	41,295
Closing down reserve	-	-	-	40,000	40,000
<i>Total designated funds</i>	70,000	-	(28,705)	40,000	81,295
General funds	95,810	166,693	(143,856)	(40,000)	78,647
Total unrestricted funds	165,810	166,693	(172,561)	-	159,942
Total funds	273,041	405,897	(372,202)	-	306,736

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

15. Movements in funds (continued)

Purposes of restricted funds

Chew Valley Community CIC

Funding from Chew Valley Community CIC is held for the development of community transport services in the Chew Valley and surrounding area.

St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact

Funding for a programme of community development targeted at people aged 50+ in the Woodspring area of North Somerset.

ACRE - Rural housing enabler

Funding from Defra to establish a rural housing enabler function, to work with communities to establish a need for rural housing and then undertake the necessary work to enable a scheme to come forward.

Quartet - Wessex (Chew Chat)

Funding to enable Chew Chat, a local voluntary group, develop social activities for older people in Chew Magna and environs.

Quartet - North Somerset Community Partnership

Funding to extend the successful Tea and Tech programme, helping older people in North Somerset to come to terms with Information Technology.

Quartet - Bath Half Marathon

Funding for walk leaders to provide a programme of walks for older people most affected by the pandemic, aiming to help prevent falls and enhance mental and physical wellbeing.

Quartet - Community wellness

Funding for new community activity that helps to support health and wellbeing across rural

Quartet - Oil Scheme

Funding to support WERN's community oil buying scheme, providing discretionary free membership to people aged 70+, and keeping in touch with isolated older people.

Quartet - Catalyst Project 1

WERN managed a programme of small grants to both local community organisations and individuals to help alleviate the impact of the cost-of-living crisis

Quartet - Catalyst Project 2

Additional funding for small grants to local community organisations working to address the impact of the cost-of-living crisis

Wesport - Rural Moves

A programme of gentle exercise for older residents in association with B&NES Village Agents and Rural Links, run on-line with funding from Sport England.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

15. Movements in funds (continued)

Purposes of restricted funds

B&NES Council - Community Development

Funding for a part time Community Development post to support the Village Agent service in B&NES and to cover increasing need for a dedicated Village Agent in the Somer Valley.

B&NES Council - Hospital

A project to increase the through-flow of patients in B&NES hospitals, linking discharge teams with Community Wellbeing Hub partner organisations. WERN Village Agents are supporting the development of this new project.

North Somerset - Community Hubs Programme

Funding to work with 'community hubs' in rural areas across North Somerset, including a programme of training to help people engage with IT, and enabling hubs to improve their

WECA - Community Transport

Funding to help maintain services after the unexpected closure of Bristol Community Transport.

Shared Prosperity Fund - North Somerset

Government funding to enable a range of new social activities to be tried in Community Buildings to encourage social engagement, especially among older people.

Shared Prosperity Fund - Pill

A fund to provide short term Community Development Workers and support on behalf of Pill Community Foundation to undertake a community asset review

EA - Water Environment Improvement Fund

Water Environment Improvement Funding from Environment Agency for water management improvements in the Bristol Avon catchment area. WERN managed the grant process, making awards to three local projects.

South Gloucestershire Village Agents

Funding to extend the Village Agents scheme across South Gloucestershire.

Purposes of designated funds

B&NES

Funds to extend the Village Agent service to Peasedown St John and surrounding area for two years from December 2021, and Combe Down and Bathavon areas for one year from January 2022.

Closing down reserve

A reserve to cover potential winding up costs, in the event the charity were to cease operations.

Transfers between funds

Transfers between funds are to top up overspends on restricted funds from unrestricted reserves.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

16. Related parties

WERN is a founder member of West of England Civil Society Partnership CIC (WoE CS). Chris Head, executive director of WERN is also a director of WoE CS. During the year, WERN received £nil from the organisation (2023: £1,960 of unrestricted donations).

Chris Head, Richard Whittington, WERN rural services consultant, and Denise Perrin, project manager for WERN, are directors of Chew Valley Community Transport CIC. WERN works in partnership with the CIC to deliver its community transport program, funded by WECA. There were no transactions between the two entities in the current year (2023: WERN received a £156 restricted donation).

WEST OF ENGLAND RURAL NETWORK

England & Wales - Charity number 1146165

Accounts

Company no. 07956732
Charity no. 1146165

**West of England Rural Network
Report and Unaudited Financial
Statements
31 March 2023**



Telephone: 01275 333701
Email: info@wern.org.uk
www.wern.org.uk

The Rural Community Council for the West of England

West of England Rural Network

Reference and administrative details

For the year ended 31 March 2023

Company number 07956732
Charity number 1146165
Registered office 5th Floor, Mariner House
62 Prince Street
Bristol
BS1 4QD

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Trustees Trustees, who are also directors under company law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:

Georgina Bigg
Laura Penny
Samantha Ross
Frances Tyson
Peter Tyzack

Executive director Chris Head

Company secretary Chris Head

Bankers

Cambridge & Counties Bank Charnwood Court 5b New Walk Leicester LE1 6TE	Monmouthshire Building Society Monmouthshire House John Frost Square Newport South Wales NP20 1PX
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The Co-operative Bank PO Box 250 Delf House Skelmersdale WN8 6WT	Redwood Bank The Nexus Building Broadway Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 3TA
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Independent examiners Godfrey Wilson Limited
Chartered accountants and statutory auditors
5th Floor, Mariner House
62 Prince Street
Bristol
BS1 4QD

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2023

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities (effective from January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

West of England Rural Network's objects are:

To promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community in the West of England, (being areas of North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire) and in particular, that of the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage, the advancement of citizenship or community development, the advancement of education or by pursuing any other charitable purposes.

West of England Rural Network's aims and intended impacts:

The aim of the West of England Rural Network is to work with communities, organisations, groups and individuals across the West of England to improve the quality of life for local communities, particularly in the rural areas, by understanding their needs, working with them towards improving services to achieve a sustainable and viable future.

The West of England Rural Network champions the goal of sustainable communities, and acts as "rural advocate" within the area, as part of the wider family of Rural Community Councils across England and the South West. Our strategic principles and aims are:

- Supporting and encouraging community-led action and strong local governance;
- Increasing long-term sustainability of local community life; and
- Influencing policies and services to achieve equity for rural communities.

Public benefit statement

The trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when establishing and reviewing its aims and objectives, and for planning future activities.

In line with guidance from the Charity Commission, the trustees are satisfied that the West of England Rural Network continues to have significant charitable purpose, and delivers very tangible public benefit through its involvement in the following areas of its activities:

Strategic support - we have supported, influenced and informed other organisations and bodies where specialist infrastructure expertise is required in order to achieve equity for people living in rural communities.

Broadband and digital - by working with rural communities and groups we are helping to ensure that there is both adequate broadband provision throughout the rural area, and supporting individuals and communities in the use of appropriate technology and access to the internet.

Access to services and community transport – we continue to support communities in the development of local services and to identify and analyse access to local services. We have supported community transport groups across the West of England, who in turn assist vulnerable and isolated individuals.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2023

Fuel poverty - we support measures to combat and improve awareness of fuel poverty in rural communities which will seek to relieve those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantages.

Village halls and community assets – we understand and value the importance to communities of their own assets. Through the facilitation and support of communities we have assisted in proactive engagement and action planning to create sustainable communities, helping them maintain and run these assets on a voluntary basis.

Village agents - by focusing on the needs of isolated and vulnerable people who have not in the past asked for assistance, the Village Agents have identified and linked people with organisations and services who are able to support and help.

Social enterprise support and funding advice - through providing business planning support, training and funding advice for projects in rural areas, we support community based social enterprises to become sustainable economically.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

The period covered by this report (April 2022 – March 2023) started by dealing with the repercussions of the Covid pandemic and its aftermath so WERN had not yet returned to business as normal.

However, the impact of the cost of living crisis was also being felt by our communities during this period and we were able to both adapt services and find new ways to work with individuals who were most disadvantaged by events far outside of their control.

Although our underlying services and projects remained, we were able to take advantage of some short-term funding streams to expand coverage and benefit our communities.

We recognise though, that short-term funding whilst providing quick support, places additional stresses on our staff and the communities we are working in and this has impacted on our, and the wider sectors, ability to set long term plans.

WERN and its staff team have continued to work professionally and diligently with the communities of North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset and Bristol through a number of innovative and creative projects as well as the consistent presence of Village Agents, or by supporting village halls and community transport groups.

It is also important to recognise the contribution of our trustees over this time, our volunteer board members who help to manage and oversee the work of WERN as well as being such great ambassadors for our work.

Special mention should be made to our retiring chair of trustees, Frances Tyson who has been with WERN for 10 years, half of which as chair. With Frances' quiet support and encouragement the organisation has grown in confidence and reach and taken on new work and supported more communities.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2023

This year has continued to see a significant increase in our partnership working (voluntary sector, health and local authorities) as well as embedding how we have organisationally operated and communicated. With the easing of Covid rules we increased the face to face contact we have with clients, staff, partners and other colleagues.

WERN has maintained a wide portfolio of activities and has built on its active role in the voluntary and community sector throughout the West of England. Our small organisation is well networked and highly regarded by partners. We have continued to maintain and develop our role as rural specialists as no other organisation within the West of England region provides this service.

As a member of ACRE and NAVCA we have a critical role as an infrastructure organisation and using the NAVCA framework we have identified how, over the period of this report we have helped support thriving communities, where people can take action on things that matter to them.

Leadership and Advocacy: As system leaders and having a strategic view across the West of England our role as a networked and connected organisation has allowed us to make sure communities voices are heard and championed at the appropriate space. This could be with the Combined Authority, with local government, in the health system, with parish councils or with national organisations and funders. Through our national ACRE Network we are linked into central government and pre Brexit even into European networks.

Partnership and Collaboration: we recognise that our expertise and skills as a small VCSE organisation are strengthened and amplified when working with other partners. We work both formally and informally with other VCSE organisations across the West of England to increase our reach and delivery for the benefit of the communities we work with.

Capacity Building: our aim of supporting, facilitating and encouraging community led action and strong local governance is key to our organisation purpose. Over the years we have been able to support communities to find, create and deliver their own solutions through information, advice and guidance. This has ranged from supporting village halls and community buildings navigate their way through Covid restrictions or more recently increased energy costs, to helping individuals and communities understand and learn how to become digitally connected and to use new services. We use an asset-based community development approach for working with communities starting from the basis of what's strong and making sure that when we leave, the community has found and is able to continue their own way forward.

Volunteering: many of the activities we support through our capacity building work rely on and use volunteers. As such we are able to support community organisations that rely on volunteers to make them work such as Village Halls, community shops and community transport schemes. Additionally, we have during Covid been able to directly recruit, train and support volunteers to help run vaccination centres and volunteer drivers for medical car schemes.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2023

The key achievements in the period of this report are;

- Over the year our Village Agents in B&NES worked both online and face to and increased activity to work within all of Bath and North East Somerset rural parishes in addition to the Midsomer Norton and Radstock conurbation and through the Wellbeing Hub. The project is jointly funded by HCRG Care Group as part of the adult social care commission with B&NES Council.
- The Rural Moves project supported by Sport England via Wesport provided opportunity for contact and support with the older isolated people in the Chew and Somer Valleys in the rural part of Bath & North East Somerset who had been participants in the Rural Links programme to increase their mobility and activity levels.
- The partnership project with Curo to provide four Village Agents who operate across rural North Somerset as part of the district wide Community Connect project providing a critical link for rurally isolated and vulnerable older people.
- Our Community Development worker based in North Somerset worked with many communities including through the Tea and Tech project bringing together older people and support services. This model was further enhanced as part of the North Somerset Community Renewal Fund which saw this work increase and partnerships strengthened as part of the wider Community Hub programme.
- In partnership with South Gloucestershire Council we were asked to pilot Village Agents in the more rural part of the authority. We started the project and had appointed one Village Agent in the reporting period and were recruiting a further 3 members of staff.
- We continued to directly support three community transport schemes in South Gloucestershire and Bath & North East Somerset and, in partnership with Voscur, have created a West of England Community Transport Network which is successfully engaging with the West of England Combined Authority to influence policy and funding in addition to providing focus for national bidding.
- Village Halls are a vital community owned asset across the West of England. Over the year, and with the support of ACRE, we have been a vital source of information and guidance supporting the work of Village Hall committees in relation to the rules and regulations coming from Government and individually supported a number of halls.
- Our Community Oil Buying Scheme continues to grow and now has 170 members and last year helped members order over 280,000 litres of heating oil collectively saving them nearly £25,000. Building on previous years partnership with Quartet Community Foundation we were again able to offer free membership to the Community Oil Buying Scheme to the over 60s thus making an important contribution to alleviating fuel poverty. In the last part of the financial year we were able to lobby local councils to ensure oil customers were able to be supported when the price of heating oil increased dramatically due to a number of global factors.
- We worked with our voluntary sector infrastructure partners under the umbrella of the West of England Civil Society Partnership primarily engaging with the Bristol, North Somerset South Gloucestershire Integrated Care System. Through the partnership, our Executive Director supports the Building Better Opportunities programme (European Social Fund) project, which increases social inclusion for those furthest from work.
- We continued to lead on the VCSE engagement at a system level for the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care System. In addition to working with and influencing health partners our reach into the VCSE sector has expanded and rural is now a key element of decision making in what is an urban centric health planning system.
- Our work as programme managers for the West of England LEADER programme scaled down during the year and we concluded our support for the final three projects whilst wrapping up the final parts of this successful project.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2023

Details of use of volunteers

West of England Rural Network currently uses volunteers in the management of the organisation. In addition, most of the activities and projects we are involved in are run by, and engage with volunteers. We continue to work with and support organisations who use volunteers such as community transport groups and village halls.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

The trustees regularly consider the reserves held by the charity, and have set a minimum of three months working capital as a sufficient reserve level. As at the end of March 2023 unrestricted general funds of £78,647 were held in reserves. The balance is equivalent to approximately three months planned expenditure.

The Trustees have designated £40,000 of unrestricted funds as at the end of March 2023 to cover the costs of closing down if required.

Employee pension scheme

West of England Rural Network is part of the statutory auto-enrolment scheme and has enrolled with National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) as its provider. Staff have the right to opt-out of this scheme.

After a qualifying period, WERN offers all staff access to a defined contribution pension scheme.

Main sources of funding

Our funding has come from a number of sources this year:

- **ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England)** as part of the national Rural Community Council agreement with Department of the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs;
- **Curo** for village agents in North Somerset;
- **St Monica Trust** for Rural Links Project and North Somerset Community Development;
- **West of England Combined Authority** acting as the accountable body for the West of England LEADER programme;
- **HCRG Care Group Ltd** (formerly Virgin Care Ltd) for Village Agents and Social Prescribing Link Worker in Bath and North East Somerset;
- **Sport England (via Wesport)** for Rural Moves;
- **Quartet Community Foundation** for the Community Oil buying scheme and various Village Agent/Rural Link projects;
- **North Somerset Council** for the Community Renewal Fund; and
- **Bath & North East Somerset Council** for Village Agents in B&NES.
- **South Gloucestershire Council** for a Village Agent pilot.

How expenditure has supported charitable objectives

The income of West of England Rural Network is applied solely towards the fulfilment of the charitable objects.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2023

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Main objectives for the next year

The trustees met regularly through the year and consolidated on the plan for strengthening Village Agent roll out supported by Asset Based Community Development workers with a strengthened overarching specialist infrastructure support and guidance role.

Our **Village Agent** programme is our key front-line delivery activity and having now been successful in both North Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset we will look to build on this model of wellbeing support with the providers of Adult and Social Care across the region in South Gloucestershire, particularly focusing on the impact of isolation and loneliness. The crisis has highlighted how important and integral this service has been for the beneficiaries and agencies we work with.

We will continue to build on the strong start of our North Somerset Asset Based Community Development project and already having engaged with communities as a natural progression of the Rural Connections and Village Agent project, we are well placed to expand this work and have successfully been awarded funding to work in the Parish of Pill & Easton-in-Gordano.

Through our membership of Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) we are able to access resources and information to actively work with and support Village Hall committees in their work including the Platinum Jubilee Fund. This presents us with further opportunities to develop this work with these important community owned assets.

Although the **Community Oil Buying Scheme** continues to provide a practical way of supporting action on fuel poverty in the rural area we are critically aware of the need to actively address climate change and carbon reduction. We are particularly aware of the impact of increased cost and at the start of the financial year had to suspend the scheme due to volatile global energy prices. We are now developing a more low key but practical response to the specific issues of energy use and are targeting the over 60s who have free membership.

We will continue to work with local authority partners to ensure that future strategic funding decisions can be made and that rural communities can be actively supported in their aspirations. **The UK Shared Prosperity Fund** has been launched and we will help support communities accessing funding although we will not be managing the process.

Our work with partner **VCS infrastructure** organisations through informal networks will continue to play an important part in making sure the voice of rural communities is heard, included and incorporated within the landscape in the West of England.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Legal status, date of incorporation and date of charity registration

The organisation is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 20th February 2012 and its objects and powers are set out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The organisation was registered at the Charity Commission on 29th February 2012.

Details of governing document

The articles prohibit any distribution of funds to trustees other than for proper reimbursement of costs incurred on the company's business.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2023

Method of recruiting and appointing new trustees

In accordance with the articles at the first annual general meeting all the trustees retired and stood for re-appointment. At each subsequent annual general meeting one-third of the trustees must retire from office. Under a bye law adopted by the board in December 2018, trustees can only serve for three years and must then retire. They may stand for re-election for up to a third term but are not eligible for subsequent re-election thereafter.

The trustees have appointed a chair, and membership is open to other individuals. Trustees may appoint additional individuals who can bring specific skills to the charity. Formal induction and training for any new trustees is provided as required.

Organisational structure and decision making

The trustees meet regularly to discuss the strategic direction of the charity, ensure its core aims and objects are being met in the most efficient way, and to take account of any risks to the charity and make sure all legal obligations are satisfied.

Outside these meetings, the day to day business of the charity is handled by the executive director and other staff.

Related parties

There are no subsidiaries or charities controlled by the same trustees. All trustees have completed a declaration of interests form so that potential related parties can be identified.

Risk statement

The trustees have considered the major risks faced by the charity and have put in place a risk register alongside systems and controls to mitigate them. Risks are regularly monitored using the risk register at trustee meetings.

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

The trustees (who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2023

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the charitable company guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £10 to the assets of the charitable company in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 March 2023 was 5. The trustees are members of the charitable company but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charitable company.

Independent examiners

Godfrey Wilson Limited were re-appointed as independent examiners to the charitable company during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the trustees on 24 November 2023 and signed on their behalf by



Samantha Ross - Chair

Independent examiner's report

To the members of

West of England Rural Network

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of West of England Rural Network (the charitable company) for the year ended 31 March 2023, which are set out on pages 12 to 28.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charitable company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the charitable company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charitable company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charitable company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), which is one of the listed bodies.

Godfrey Wilson Limited also provides payroll and bookkeeping services to the charitable company. I confirm that as a member of the ICAEW I am subject to the FRC's Revised Ethical Standard 2016, which I have applied with respect to this engagement.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- (1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the charitable company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- (2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- (3) the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- (4) the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Independent examiner's report

To the members of

West of England Rural Network

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Rob Wilson

Date: 24 November 2023

Rob Wilson FCA

Member of the ICAEW

For and on behalf of:

Godfrey Wilson Limited

Chartered accountants and statutory auditors

5th Floor Mariner House

62 Prince Street

Bristol

BS1 4QD

West of England Rural Network

Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Income from:					
Donations	3	239,204	1,960	241,164	146,554
Charitable activities	4	-	160,631	160,631	242,930
Other trading activities	5	-	1,470	1,470	1,910
Investments		-	2,632	2,632	891
Total income		<u>239,204</u>	<u>166,693</u>	<u>405,897</u>	<u>392,285</u>
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	2,833	2,833	3,659
Charitable activities		<u>199,641</u>	<u>169,728</u>	<u>369,369</u>	<u>266,925</u>
Total expenditure	7	<u>199,641</u>	<u>172,561</u>	<u>372,202</u>	<u>270,584</u>
Net income / (expenditure) and net movement in funds	9	39,563	(5,868)	33,695	121,701
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		<u>107,231</u>	<u>165,810</u>	<u>273,041</u>	<u>151,340</u>
Total funds carried forward		<u><u>146,794</u></u>	<u><u>159,942</u></u>	<u><u>306,736</u></u>	<u><u>273,041</u></u>

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in note 15 to the accounts.

West of England Rural Network

Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2023

	Note	£	2023 £	2022 £
Current assets				
Debtors	12	737		40,578
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>313,843</u>		<u>244,870</u>
		314,580		285,448
Liabilities				
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year	13	<u>(7,844)</u>		<u>(12,407)</u>
Net current assets			<u>306,736</u>	<u>273,041</u>
Net assets	14		<u>306,736</u>	<u>273,041</u>
Funds	15			
Restricted funds			146,794	107,231
Unrestricted funds				
Designated funds			81,295	70,000
General funds			<u>78,647</u>	<u>95,810</u>
Total charity funds			<u>306,736</u>	<u>273,041</u>

The directors are satisfied that the company is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) relating to the audit of the financial statements for the year by virtue of section 477(2), and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 476 of the Act.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- (i) ensuring that the Company keeps proper accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act; and
- (ii) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of section 393, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

Approved by the trustees on 24 November 2023 and signed on their behalf by



Samantha Ross - Chair

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities in preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

West of England Rural Network meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

b) Going concern basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared on the assumption that the charity is able to continue as a going concern, which the trustees consider appropriate having regard to the current level of unrestricted reserves. There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

c) Conduit funding

The charity does not include income and expenditure in the SOFA for project partners for whom they act as agent by collecting donations and passing them on. The amount of such income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2023 was £1,000 (2022: £1,960).

d) Income

Income is recognised when the charitable company has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the items of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from the government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charitable company has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

e) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charitable company; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

f) Funds accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charitable company. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charitable company's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charitable company.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

1. Accounting policies (continued)

g) Grants payable

Grants payable are recognised as expenditure on the earlier of a) when the charity has a present obligation to transfer resources; and b) when the charity ceases to control the resource (e.g. via transferring funds to the grant recipient).

h) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

i) Allocation of support and governance costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity, including the costs of complying with constitutional and statutory requirements and any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. These costs have been allocated in full to charitable activities.

j) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

k) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

l) Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the charitable company has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

m) Financial instruments

The charitable company only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently recognised at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

n) Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for its employees. There are no further liabilities other than that already recognised in the SOFA.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

1. Accounting policies (continued)

o) Accounting estimates and key judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

2. Prior period comparatives

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2022 Total £
Income from:			
Donations	146,554	-	146,554
Charitable activities	-	242,930	242,930
Other trading activities	-	1,910	1,910
Investments	-	891	891
Total income	146,554	245,731	392,285
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	-	3,659	3,659
Charitable activities	120,523	146,402	266,925
Total expenditure	120,523	150,061	270,584
Net income	26,031	95,670	121,701
Transfers between funds	1,991	(1,991)	-
Net movement in funds	28,022	93,679	121,701

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

3. Income from donations

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Grants > £5,000				
North Somerset Council	62,538	-	62,538	62,438
South Gloucestershire Council	14,963	-	14,963	-
St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community	30,000	-	30,000	30,000
Virgin Care	-	-	-	17,274
Environment Agency - WEIF	15,000	-	15,000	15,000
Quartet - Covid-19	-	-	-	9,500
Quartet - North Somerset Community Partnership (Digital)	15,000	-	15,000	-
BANES Council - Hospital Project	44,400	-	44,400	-
BANES Council - Community Development	30,252	-	30,252	-
BANES Council - Miicare	5,000	-	5,000	-
Wesport - Rural Moves	5,000	-	5,000	3,921
Grants < £5,000				
Chew Valley Community CIC	156	-	156	3,921
Quartet - Surviving Winter	-	-	-	3,000
Quartet - Bath Half Marathon	-	-	-	1,500
Quartet - Oil Scheme	4,190	-	4,190	-
Quartet - Wessex North Somerset Digital Programme	3,000	-	3,000	-
Quartet - Community Wellness	2,000	-	2,000	-
St Monica Trust - Coronation Events	500	-	500	-
BANES Council - Ukraine Support	3,855	-	3,855	-
West of England Combined Authority - Community Transport	2,750	-	2,750	-
West of England Civil Society Partnership	-	1,960	1,960	-
Westfield Parish Council - Community Support	600	-	600	-
Total income from donations	239,204	1,960	241,164	146,554

All income from donations in the prior year were restricted.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

4. Income from charitable activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
BANES Council	-	28,000	28,000	75,000
Virgin Care	-	51,547	51,547	68,578
Action with Communities in Rural England	-	36,325	36,325	37,325
Curo	-	25,307	25,307	27,067
West of England Combined Authority	-	14,837	14,837	13,025
Second Step	-	-	-	8,100
National Association for Voluntary and Community Action	-	1,000	1,000	4,750
Southmead Development Trust	-	2,000	2,000	-
Voluntary Action North Somerset	-	-	-	4,200
Voscur	-	-	-	3,325
Shopmobility South Gloucestershire	-	1,615	1,615	1,560
Total income from charitable activities	-	160,631	160,631	242,930

All income from charitable activities in the prior year was unrestricted.

5. Income from other trading activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Oil membership scheme	-	1,470	1,470	1,910

All income from other trading activities in the prior year was unrestricted.

6. Government grants

The charitable company receives government grants, defined as funding from Action with Communities in Rural England (ultimately from DEFRA), Bath and North East Somerset Council, North Somerset Council, Westfield Parish Council, the West of England Combined Authority, South Gloucestershire Council and the Environmental Agency to fund charitable activities. The total value of such grants in the period ending 31 March 2023 was £245,482 (2022: £102,325). There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies attaching to these grants in 2022/23.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

7. Total expenditure

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance £	2023 Total £
Staff costs (note 10)	2,833	214,360	8,266	225,459
Training	-	789	-	789
Printing, postage and stationery	-	2,244	-	2,244
Membership and subscriptions	-	6,652	-	6,652
Travel and subsistence	-	10,328	-	10,328
Event costs and room hire	-	7,453	-	7,453
Premises costs	-	-	1,440	1,440
Telephone costs	-	-	4,711	4,711
Computer costs	-	-	9,007	9,007
Project consultants	-	57,785	-	57,785
Project costs	-	365	-	365
Insurance	-	-	952	952
Accountancy fees	-	-	5,076	5,076
Design and promotion	-	-	1,155	1,155
Legal and professional fees	-	-	2,425	2,425
Miscellaneous costs	-	-	298	298
Governance costs	-	-	39	39
Grants payable (note 8)	-	<u>36,024</u>	-	<u>36,024</u>
Sub-total	2,833	336,000	33,369	372,202
Allocation of support and governance costs	-	<u>33,369</u>	<u>(33,369)</u>	-
Total expenditure	<u>2,833</u>	<u>369,369</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>372,202</u>

Total governance costs were £2,859 (2022: £2,966).

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

7. Total expenditure (continued)

Prior period comparative	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance £	2022 Total £
Staff costs (note 10)	3,659	171,090	2,769	177,518
Training	-	815	-	815
Printing, postage and stationery	-	1,596	-	1,596
Membership and subscriptions	-	5,761	-	5,761
Travel and subsistence	-	4,347	-	4,347
Event costs and room hire	-	5,134	-	5,134
Premises costs	-	-	2,146	2,146
Telephone costs	-	-	4,720	4,720
Computer costs	-	-	11,736	11,736
Project consultants	-	30,352	-	30,352
Project costs	-	3,399	-	3,399
Insurance	-	-	942	942
Accountancy fees	-	-	5,354	5,354
Design and promotion	-	-	516	516
Legal and professional fees	-	-	1,187	1,187
Miscellaneous costs	-	-	255	255
Governance costs	-	-	26	26
Grants payable (note 8)	-	14,780	-	14,780
Sub-total	3,659	237,274	29,651	270,584
Allocation of support and governance costs	-	29,651	(29,651)	-
Total expenditure	<u>3,659</u>	<u>266,925</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>270,584</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

8. Grants payable

	2023	2022
	£	£
Bristol Avon River	10,088	12,900
Flax Bourton Parish Council	4,890	-
Blagdon Village Club	3,919	-
Long Ashton Community Centre	1,146	-
Portishead Youth Centre	1,700	-
Yate Town Council	1,300	-
Flax Bourton Baby	2,090	-
Coaching for All	6,000	-
Avon Wildlife Trust	-	1,600
Bleadon Covid-19 Support	-	180
Community Grant	-	100
Others < £1,000	4,890	-
	<u>36,024</u>	<u>14,780</u>

All grants and donations payable were paid to further charitable activities. No support costs were allocated to these grants.

9. Net movement in funds

This is stated after charging:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Depreciation	-	-
Operating lease payments	-	-
Trustees' indemnity insurance	Nil	Nil
Trustees' remuneration	Nil	Nil
Trustees' reimbursed expenses	Nil	Nil
Independent examiner's fees:		
▪ Independent examination	2,820	2,940
▪ Other services	2,567	2,584
	<u>2,567</u>	<u>2,584</u>

10. Staff costs and numbers

Staff costs were as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Salaries and wages	213,517	167,350
Social security costs	6,681	6,025
Pension costs	5,261	4,143
	<u>225,459</u>	<u>177,518</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

10. Staff costs and numbers (continued)

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the year.

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the Executive Director. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £40,279 (2022: £39,445).

	2023	2022
	No.	No.
Average head count	<u>20</u>	<u>15</u>

11. Taxation

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

12. Debtors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade debtors	-	33,173
Accrued income	737	5,405
Other debtors	-	2,000
	<u>737</u>	<u>40,578</u>

13. Creditors : amounts due within 1 year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade creditors	2,031	3,147
Accruals	5,025	5,954
Conduit funding	-	1,960
Other creditors	788	1,346
	<u>7,844</u>	<u>12,407</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

14. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	General funds £	Total funds £
Current assets	146,794	81,295	86,491	314,580
Current liabilities	-	-	(7,844)	(7,844)
Net assets at 31 March 2023	<u>146,794</u>	<u>81,295</u>	<u>78,647</u>	<u>306,736</u>
Prior period comparative				
	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	General funds £	Total funds £
Current assets	107,231	70,000	108,217	285,448
Current liabilities	-	-	(12,407)	(12,407)
Net assets at 31 March 2022	<u>107,231</u>	<u>70,000</u>	<u>95,810</u>	<u>273,041</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

15. Movements in funds

	At 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2023 £
Restricted funds					
North Somerset - Community Hubs	35,564	62,538	(98,102)	-	-
Chew Valley Community CIC	19,198	156	(343)	-	19,011
St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact	43,412	30,000	(27,323)	-	46,089
St Monica Trust - Rural Links	536	-	(536)	-	-
St Monica Trust - Coronation	-	500	(500)	-	-
Virgin Care - Digital Healthcare	7,000	-	(7,000)	-	-
Quartet - Wessex	-	3,000	-	-	3,000
Quartet - North Somerset Community Partnership	-	15,000	(2,380)	-	12,620
Quartet - Rural Links	187	-	(187)	-	-
Quartet - Bath Half Marathon	884	-	(884)	-	-
Quartet - Community Wellness	-	2,000	-	-	2,000
Quartet - Oil Scheme	-	4,190	(4,190)	-	-
Wesport - Rural Moves	-	5,000	(2,893)	-	2,107
B&NES Council - Community Development	-	30,252	(12,529)	-	17,723
B&NES Council - Miicare	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
B&NES Council - Community Transport (Ukraine)	-	54	(54)	-	-
B&NES Council - Hospital	-	44,400	(5,423)	-	38,977
B&NES Council - Ukraine	-	3,801	(3,801)	-	-
WECA - Community Transport	-	2,750	(2,750)	-	-
Westfield Parish Council - Community Support	-	600	(600)	-	-
Avon & Somerset Police Commissioner	450	-	(450)	-	-
EA - Water Environment Improvement Fund	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	-
South Gloucestershire Village Agents	-	14,963	(9,696)	-	5,267
Total restricted funds	107,231	239,204	(199,641)	-	146,794
Unrestricted funds					
<i>Designated funds:</i>					
B&NES	70,000	-	(28,705)	-	41,295
Closing down reserve	-	-	-	40,000	40,000
<i>Total designated funds</i>	70,000	-	(28,705)	40,000	81,295
General funds	95,810	166,693	(143,856)	(40,000)	78,647
Total unrestricted funds	165,810	166,693	(172,561)	-	159,942
Total funds	273,041	405,897	(372,202)	-	306,736

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

15. Movements in funds (continued)

Prior period comparative	At 1 April 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2022 £
Restricted funds					
St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact	32,022	30,000	(18,610)	-	43,412
North Somerset - Community Hubs	-	62,438	(26,874)	-	35,564
Chew Valley Community CIC	15,301	3,921	(24)	-	19,198
Virgin Care - Digital Healthcare	-	7,000	-	-	7,000
Quartet - Bath Half Marathon	-	1,500	(616)	-	884
St Monica Trust - Rural Links	18,661	-	(18,125)	-	536
Avon & Somerset Police Commissioner	2,400	-	(1,950)	-	450
Quartet - Rural Links	500	-	(313)	-	187
Lottery Building Connections Fund	4,209	-	(4,229)	20	-
Virgin Care - B&NES Vaccination Project	3,574	10,274	(15,609)	1,761	-
Quartet - Wessex (Chew Chat)	1,037	-	(1,037)	-	-
Quartet - Events	755	-	(760)	5	-
Sperring Trust	750	-	(750)	-	-
EA - Water Environment Improvement Fund	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	-
Quartet - Covid-19	-	9,500	(9,500)	-	-
Wesport - Rural Moves	-	3,921	(4,126)	205	-
Quartet - Surviving Winter	-	3,000	(3,000)	-	-
Total restricted funds	<u>79,209</u>	<u>146,554</u>	<u>(120,523)</u>	<u>1,991</u>	<u>107,231</u>
Unrestricted funds					
<i>Designated funds:</i>					
B&NES	-	-	-	70,000	70,000
<i>Total designated funds</i>	-	-	-	70,000	70,000
General funds	<u>72,131</u>	<u>245,731</u>	<u>(150,061)</u>	<u>(71,991)</u>	<u>95,810</u>
Total unrestricted funds	<u>72,131</u>	<u>245,731</u>	<u>(150,061)</u>	<u>(1,991)</u>	<u>165,810</u>
Total funds	<u><u>151,340</u></u>	<u><u>392,285</u></u>	<u><u>(270,584)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>273,041</u></u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

15. Movements in funds (continued)

Purposes of restricted funds

North Somerset - Community Hubs Programme

Funding to work with 'community hubs' in rural areas across North Somerset, including a programme of training to help people engage with IT, and enabling hubs to improve their facilities.

Chew Valley Community CIC

Funding from Chew Valley Community CIC is held for the development of community transport services in the Chew Valley and surrounding area.

St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact

Funding for a programme of community development targeted at people aged 50+ in the Woodspring area of North Somerset.

St Monica Trust - Rural Links

St Monica Trust has funded WERN to set up "Rural Links" - a network of activities providing engagement and learning opportunities with a focus on health and wellbeing, and reducing social isolation and loneliness.

St Monica Trust - Coronation

Time limited funding for community groups to run events giving older people the opportunity to celebrate the King's coronation.

Virgin Care - Digital Healthcare Trial

Funding to train Village Agents to install and support equipment in the homes of users participating in the trial, provide feedback, and undertake an evaluation of impact on users, with the aim of reducing hospital admissions, loneliness and anxiety.

Quartet - Wessex (Chew Chat)

Funding to enable Chew Chat, a local voluntary group, develop social activities for older people in Chew Magna and environs.

Quartet - North Somerset Community Partnership

Funding to extend the successful Tea and Tech programme, helping older people in North Somerset to come to terms with Information Technology.

Quartet - Rural Links

Funding to support a local Music Project bringing together amateur musicians playing purely for pleasure.

Quartet - Bath Half Marathon

Funding for walk leaders to provide a programme of walks for older people most affected by the pandemic, aiming to help prevent falls and enhance mental and physical wellbeing.

Quartet - Community wellness

Funding for new community activity that helps to support health and wellbeing across rural B&NES.

Quartet - Oil Scheme

Funding to support WERN's community oil buying scheme, providing discretionary free membership to people aged 70+, and keeping in touch with isolated older people.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

15. Movements in funds (continued)

Wesport - Rural Moves

A programme of gentle exercise for older residents in association with B&NES Village Agents and Rural Links, run on-line with funding from Sport England.

B&NES Council - Community Development

Funding for a part time Community Development post to support the Village Agent service in B&NES and to cover increasing need for a dedicated Village Agent in the Somer Valley.

B&NES Council - Miicare

Funding to extend a research project providing digital healthcare to vulnerable older residents in collaboration with the Village Agent programme in B&NES.

B&NES Council - Community Transport (Ukraine)

Payment for a one-off return journey to South Wales to enable one of our Ukrainian guests to update essential ID.

B&NES Council - Hospital

A project to increase the through-flow of patients in B&NES hospitals, linking discharge teams with Community Wellbeing Hub partner organisations. WERN Village Agents are supporting the development of this new project.

B&NES Council - Ukraine Support

Home for Ukraine funding to carry out welfare check on their arrivals, offer social and practical to support Ukrainians lodging with B&NES householders.

WECA - Community Transport

Funding to help maintain services after the unexpected closure of Bristol Community Transport.

Westfield Parish Council - Community Support

Funding to provide a series of reminiscence sessions to local people living in Westfield Parish.

Avon & Somerset Police Commissioner

Funding for a programme of refresher training for older drivers in rural areas of B&NES and North Somerset, organised by the Village Agents in association with the police.

EA - Water Environment Improvement Fund

Water Environment Improvement Funding from Environment Agency for water management improvements in the Bristol Avon catchment area. WERN managed the grant process, making awards to three local projects.

Purposes of designated funds

B&NES

Funds to extend the Village Agent service to Peasedown St John and surrounding area for two years from December 2021, and Combe Down and Bathavon areas for one year from January 2022.

Closing down reserve

A reserve to cover potential winding up costs, in the event the charity were to cease operations.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

16. Related parties

WERN is a founder member of West of England Civil Society Partnership CIC (WoE CS). Chris Head, executive director of WERN is also a director of WoE CS. During the year, WERN received £nil of conduit funding from the organisation, (2022: £1,960). These funds were released to the general funds of the charity in the year, rather than allocated to specific beneficiaries.

There were no other related party transactions during the current year

WEST OF ENGLAND RURAL NETWORK

England & Wales - Charity number 1146165

Accounts

Company no. 07956732
Charity no. 1146165

West of England Rural Network
Report and Unaudited Financial
Statements
31 March 2022

West of England Rural Network

Reference and administrative details

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Company number	07956732	
Charity number	1146165	
Registered office	5th Floor, Mariner House 62 Prince Street Bristol BS1 4QD	
Operational address	PO Box 1237 Bristol BS40 8WJ	
Trustees	Trustees, who are also directors under company law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:	
	Georgina Bigg	
	Susan McKay	resigned 30 September 2021
	Laura Penny	
	Samantha Ross	appointed 16 February 2022
	Frances Tyson	
	Peter Tyzack	
Executive director	Chris Head	
Company secretary	Chris Head	
Bankers	Cambridge & Counties Bank Charnwood Court 5b New Walk Leicester LE1 6TE	Monmouthshire Building Society Monmouthshire House John Frost Square Newport South Wales NP20 1PX
	The Co-operative Bank PO Box 250 Delf House Skelmersdale WN8 6WT	Redwood Bank The Nexus Building Broadway Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 3TA
Independent examiners	Godfrey Wilson Limited Chartered accountants and statutory auditors 5th Floor, Mariner House 62 Prince Street Bristol BS1 4QD	

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2022

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities (effective from January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

West of England Rural Network's objects are:

To promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community in the West of England, (being areas of North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire) and in particular, that of the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage, the advancement of citizenship or community development, the advancement of education or by pursuing any other charitable purposes.

West of England Rural Network's aims and intended impacts:

The aim of the West of England Rural Network is to work with communities, organisations, groups and individuals across the West of England to improve the quality of life for local communities, particularly in the rural areas, by understanding their needs, working with them towards improving services to achieve a sustainable and viable future.

The West of England Rural Network champions the goal of sustainable communities, and acts as "rural advocate" within the area, as part of the wider family of Rural Community Councils across England and the South West. Our strategic principles and aims are:

- Supporting and encouraging community-led action and strong local governance;
- Increasing long-term sustainability of local community life; and
- Influencing policies and services to achieve equity for rural communities.

Public benefit statement

The trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when establishing and reviewing its aims and objectives, and for planning future activities.

In line with guidance from the Charity Commission, the trustees are satisfied that the West of England Rural Network continues to have significant charitable purpose, and delivers very tangible public benefit through its involvement in the following areas of its activities:

Strategic support - we have supported, influenced and informed other organisations and bodies where specialist infrastructure expertise is required in order to achieve equity for people living in rural communities.

Broadband and digital - by working with rural communities and groups we are helping to ensure that there is both adequate broadband provision throughout the rural area, and supporting individuals and communities in the use of appropriate technology and access to the internet.

Access to services and community transport – we continue to support communities in the development of local services and to identify and analyse access to local services. We have supported community transport groups across the West of England, who in turn assist vulnerable and isolated individuals.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Fuel poverty - we support measures to combat and improve awareness of fuel poverty in rural communities which will seek to relieve those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantages.

Village halls and community assets – we understand and value the importance to communities of their own assets. Through the facilitation and support of communities we have assisted in proactive engagement and action planning to create sustainable communities, helping them maintain and run these assets on a voluntary basis.

Village agents - by focusing on the needs of isolated and vulnerable people who have not in the past asked for assistance, the Village Agents have identified and linked people with organisations and services who are able to support and help.

Social enterprise support and funding advice - through providing business planning support, training and funding advice for projects in rural areas, we support community based social enterprises to become sustainable economically.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

2022 marked the tenth anniversary of the creation of West of England Rural Network as a charity. Over these years WERN and its staff team have worked diligently with the communities of North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset and Bristol through a number of innovative and creative projects as well as the consistent presence of Village Agents, or by supporting village halls and community transport groups.

It is also important to recognise the contribution of our trustees over this time, our volunteer board members who help to manage and oversee the work of WERN as well as being such great ambassadors for our work.

Over the course of this anniversary year we will pull together some stories from our first 10 year and will be celebrating this achievement at our AGM.

This last year continued in the theme set in 2020-21 with the global pandemic running through our work. Our organisation, its staff, trustees and volunteers have continued to adapt and have responded to the pandemic and new ways of working that it entailed.

Although our pre-covid development plans were put on hold and we re-focused our activities and were able to meet and exceed our charitable aims and objectives giving us a renewed purpose and vision for the coming year.

This year has continued to see a significant increase in our partnership working, (voluntary sector, health and local authorities) as well as embedding how we have organisationally operated and communicated. We are now a virtual organisation, but this has significantly increased the contact we have with clients, staff, partners and other colleagues.

This report of our achievements and performance is set within this external operating context.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2022

WERN has maintained a wide portfolio of activities and has built on its active role in the voluntary and community sector throughout the West of England. Our small organisation is well networked and highly regarded by partners. We have continued to maintain and develop our role as rural specialists as no other organisation within the West of England region provides this service.

The key achievements in the period of this report are;

- Over the year our Village Agents in Bath and North East Somerset worked both online and face to face, (where regulation and practically permitted) and increased activity to work within all of Bath and North East Somerset rural parishes in addition to the Midsomer Norton and Radstock conurbation and through the Wellbeing Hub. The project is jointly funded by HCRG Care Group, (formerly Virgin Care) as part of the adult social care commission with Bath and North East Somerset Council;
- We worked with the Three Valleys Health Primary Care Network to deliver a Social Prescribing Link Worker (a partnership project with Developing Health and Independence) but whilst this project allowed us to reach a more specialist cohort we chose not to continue with this service and completed the contract in November;
- The Rural Moves project supported by Sport England via Wesport provided opportunity for contact and support with the older isolated people in the Chew and Somer Valleys in the rural part of Bath & North East Somerset who had been participants in the Rural Links programme to increase their mobility and activity levels;
- The partnership project with Curo to provide four Village Agents who operate across rural North Somerset as part of the district wide Community Connect project also went online and was also a critical link for rurally isolated and vulnerable older people;
- Our Community Development worker based in North Somerset worked with many communities including through the Tea and Tech project bringing together older people and support services. This model was further enhanced as part of the North Somerset Community Renewal Fund which saw this work increase and partnerships strengthened as part of the wider Community Hub programme;
- We continued to directly support three community transport schemes in South Gloucestershire and Bath & North East Somerset and, in partnership with Voscur, have created a West of England Community Transport group which is successfully engaging with the WECA to influence policy and funding in addition to providing focus for national bidding;
- Village Halls are a vital community owned asset across the West of England. Over the year, and with the support of ACRE, we have been a vital source of information and guidance supporting the work of Village Hall committees in relation to the rules and regulations coming from Government. We have held a number of online sessions throughout the year and individually supported a number of halls;
- Our Community Oil Buying Scheme continues to grow and now has 170 members and last year helped members order over 300,000 litres of heating oil collectively saving them at least £25,000. Building on previous years partnership with Quartet Community Foundation we were again able to offer free membership to the Community Oil Buying Scheme to the over 60s thus making an important contribution to alleviating fuel poverty. In the last part of the financial year we were able to lobby local councils to ensure oil customers were able to be supported when the price of heating oil increased dramatically due to a number of global factors;

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2022

- We worked with our voluntary sector infrastructure partners under the umbrella of the West of England Civil Society Partnership CIC primarily engaging with the Bristol, North Somerset South Gloucestershire Integrated Care System. Through the partnership, our Executive Director supports the Building Better Opportunities programme (European Social Fund) project, which increases social inclusion for those furthest from work. During the course of the year the partners of the CIC undertook a review of the purpose and function of the organisation and agreed to close it down at the end of the financial year;
- We continue to lead on the VCSE engagement at a system level for the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire ICS. In addition to working with and influencing health partners our reach into the VCSE sector has expanded and rural is now a key element of decision making in what is an urban centric health planning system; and
- Our work as programme managers for the West of England LEADER programme scaled down during the year but we continued to support three new projects to accommodate a national underspend on the project.

Details of use of volunteers

West of England Rural Network currently uses volunteers in the management of the organisation. In addition, most of the activities and projects we are involved in are run by, and engage with volunteers. The Rural Links project encourages formal volunteering. We continue to work with and support organisations who use volunteers such as community transport groups and village halls.

During the pandemic we were approached to provide volunteer support for a community vaccination centre operated by the Three Valley Health Care Primary Care Network in B&NES. We were quickly able to recruit and task 90 volunteers who provided over 7,000 hours of volunteer support during which over 40,000 vaccinations were delivered. This was recognised by B&NES Council with the awarding of a Community Shining Light Award.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

The trustees regularly consider the reserves held by the charity, and have set a minimum of three months working capital as a sufficient reserve level. As at the end of March 2022 unrestricted general funds of £95,810 were held in reserves. The balance is equivalent to approximately three months planned expenditure.

Employee pension scheme

All eligible qualifying staff will be automatically enrolled on to the National Employment Savings Trust scheme.

West of England Rural Network is part of the statutory auto-enrolment scheme and has enrolled with National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) as its provider. Staff have the right to opt-out of this scheme.

After a qualifying period, WERN offers all staff access to a defined contribution pension scheme.

Main sources of funding

Our funding has come from a number of sources this year:

- **ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England)** as part of the national Rural Community Council agreement with Department of the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs;
- **Curo** for village agents in North Somerset;

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2022

- **St Monica Trust** for Rural Links Project and North Somerset Community Development;
- **West of England Combined Authority** acting as the accountable body for the West of England LEADER programme;
- **HCRG Care Group Ltd** (formerly Virgin Care Ltd) for Village Agents and Social Prescribing Link Worker in Bath and North East Somerset;
- **Sport England (via Wesport)** for Rural Moves;
- **Quartet Community Foundation** for the Community Oil buying scheme and various Village Agent/Rural Link projects;
- **NAVCA** as part of the Voluntary Community Sector Emergency Partnership;
- **North Somerset Council** for the Community Renewal Fund; and
- **Bath & North East Somerset Council** for Village Agents in B&NES.

How expenditure has supported charitable objectives

The income of West of England Rural Network is applied solely towards the fulfilment of the charitable objects.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Covid-19 and cost of living crisis

Unlike last years report the impact of Covid-19 is now better understood and new working practices have been adopted, however, just as we are incorporating this we are having to build in issues around the cost of living crisis and the impact along with all organisations in the civic, public and private sectors and our response.

Over the reporting period specific and targeted funding streams have continued to be made available to support the wider needs of the UK population, NHS and communities in general. WERN has been able to secure funding to support these short-term pieces of work but it is clear that we are entering a new phase both in terms of covid recovery and cost of living and that funding (and particularly medium/long term funding) will again prove to be competitive.

Main objectives for the next year

The trustees met regularly through the year and consolidated on the plan for strengthening Village Agent roll out supported by Asset Based Community Development workers with a strengthened overarching specialist infrastructure support and guidance role.

Our **Village Agent** programme is our key front-line delivery activity and having now been successful in both North Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset we will look to build on this model of wellbeing support with the providers of Adult and Social Care across the region in South Gloucestershire, particularly focusing on the impact of isolation and loneliness. The crisis has highlighted how important and integral this service has been for the beneficiaries and agencies we work with.

We will continue to build on the strong start of our **North Somerset Asset Based Community Development** project and already having engaged with communities as a natural progression of the Rural Connections and Village Agent project, we are well placed to expand this work.

Through our membership of Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) we are able to access resources and information to actively work with and support the **Village Hall** committees in their work following the Covid-19 restrictions. This presents us with further opportunities to develop this work with these important community owned assets.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Although the **Community Oil Buying Scheme** continues to provide a practical way of supporting action on fuel poverty in the rural area we are critically aware of the need to actively address climate change and carbon reduction. We are particularly aware of the impact of increased cost and at the start of the financial year had to suspend the scheme due to volatile global energy prices. We are now developing a more low key but practical response to the specific issues of energy use and are targeting the over 60s who have free membership.

We will continue to work with local authority partners to ensure that future strategic funding decisions can be made and that rural communities can be actively supported in their aspirations. The **UK Shared Prosperity Fund** is now being rolled out and we must make sure that rural areas receive a fair and equitable part of this fund. Already we have helped to support a Community Renewal Fund bid to government and our presence across the wider West of England helps to achieve our organisational aims.

Our work with partner **VCS infrastructure** organisations through informal networks will continue to play an important part in making sure the voice of rural communities is heard, included and incorporated within the post Covid-19 landscape in the West of England.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Main objectives for the next year

The organisation is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 20th February 2012 and its objects and powers are set out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The organisation was registered at the Charity Commission on 29th February 2012.

Details of governing document

The articles prohibit any distribution of funds to trustees other than for proper reimbursement of costs incurred on the company's business.

Method of recruiting and appointing new trustees

In accordance with the articles at the first annual general meeting all the trustees retired and stood for re-appointment. At each subsequent annual general meeting one-third of the trustees must retire from office. Under a bye law adopted by the board in December 2018, trustees can only serve for three years and must then retire. They may stand for re-election for up to a third term but are not eligible for subsequent re-election thereafter.

The trustees have appointed a chair, and membership is open to other individuals. Trustees may appoint additional individuals who can bring specific skills to the charity. Formal induction and training for any new trustees is provided as required.

Organisational structure and decision making

The trustees meet regularly to discuss the strategic direction of the charity, ensure its core aims and objects are being met in the most efficient way, and to take account of any risks to the charity and make sure all legal obligations are satisfied.

Outside these meetings, the day to day business of the charity is handled by the executive director and other staff.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Related parties

There are no subsidiaries or charities controlled by the same trustees. All trustees have completed a declaration of interests form so that potential related parties can be identified.

The West of England Rural Network is a named asset locked body in the West of England Civil Society Partnership CIC, a community interest company whose other asset locked bodies are The Care Forum, Voscur, Wesport, CVS South Gloucestershire, Voluntary Action North Somerset and B&NES Third Sector Group. The Executive Director of the West of England Rural Network is a director of the CIC. Although the partnership meets regularly, at the year end the West of England Civil Society Partnership had not undertaken any activity and as such there were no related party transactions. The West of England Civil Society Partnership stopped activity and was struck off by agreement of its directors on 31 March 2022 and the initial loan from each founding partner was repaid in full.

Risk statement

The trustees have considered the major risks faced by the charity and have put in place a risk register alongside systems and controls to mitigate them. Risks are regularly monitored using the risk register at trustee meetings.

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

The trustees (who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Members of the charitable company guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £10 to the assets of the charitable company in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 March 2022 was 5. The trustees are members of the charitable company but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charitable company.

Independent examiners

Godfrey Wilson Limited were re-appointed as independent examiners to the charitable company during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the trustees on 25 July 2022 and signed on their behalf by

Frances Tyson

Frances Tyson - Chair

Independent examiner's report

To the members of

West of England Rural Network

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of West of England Rural Network (the charitable company) for the year ended 31 March 2022, which are set out on pages 11 to 26.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charitable company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the charitable company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charitable company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charitable company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), which is one of the listed bodies.

Godfrey Wilson Limited also provides payroll and bookkeeping services to the charitable company. I confirm that as a member of the ICAEW I am subject to the FRC's Revised Ethical Standard 2016, which I have applied with respect to this engagement.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- (1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the charitable company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- (2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- (3) the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- (4) the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Independent examiner's report

To the members of

West of England Rural Network

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Rob Wilson

Date: 25 July 2022

Rob Wilson FCA

Member of the ICAEW

For and on behalf of:

Godfrey Wilson Limited

Chartered accountants and statutory auditors

5th Floor Mariner House

62 Prince Street

Bristol

BS1 4QD

West of England Rural Network

Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2022 Total £	2021 Total £
Income from:					
Donations	3	146,554	-	146,554	116,318
Charitable activities	4	-	242,930	242,930	155,547
Other trading activities	5	-	1,910	1,910	2,260
Investments		-	891	891	1,073
Total income		<u>146,554</u>	<u>245,731</u>	<u>392,285</u>	<u>275,198</u>
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	3,659	3,659	1,894
Charitable activities		<u>120,523</u>	<u>146,402</u>	<u>266,925</u>	<u>236,251</u>
Total expenditure	7	<u>120,523</u>	<u>150,061</u>	<u>270,584</u>	<u>238,145</u>
Net income		26,031	95,670	121,701	37,053
Transfers between funds		<u>1,991</u>	<u>(1,991)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net movement in funds	9	28,022	93,679	121,701	37,053
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		<u>79,209</u>	<u>72,131</u>	<u>151,340</u>	<u>114,287</u>
Total funds carried forward		<u><u>107,231</u></u>	<u><u>165,810</u></u>	<u><u>273,041</u></u>	<u><u>151,340</u></u>

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in note 15 to the accounts.

West of England Rural Network

Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2022

	Note	£	2022 £	2021 £
Current assets				
Debtors	12	40,578		12,181
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>244,870</u>		<u>152,994</u>
		285,448		165,175
Liabilities				
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year	13	<u>(12,407)</u>		<u>(13,835)</u>
Net current assets			<u>273,041</u>	<u>151,340</u>
Net assets	14		<u>273,041</u>	<u>151,340</u>
Funds				
Restricted funds	15		107,231	79,209
Unrestricted funds				
Designated funds			70,000	-
General funds			<u>95,810</u>	<u>72,131</u>
Total charity funds			<u>273,041</u>	<u>151,340</u>

The directors are satisfied that the company is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) relating to the audit of the financial statements for the year by virtue of section 477(2), and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 476 of the Act.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- (i) ensuring that the Company keeps proper accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act; and
- (ii) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of section 393, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

Approved by the trustees on 25 July 2022 and signed on their behalf by

Frances Tyson

Frances Tyson - Chair

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities in preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

West of England Rural Network meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

b) Going concern basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared on the assumption that the charity is able to continue as a going concern. The trustees have considered whether the Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the charity's current and future financial position but are satisfied that both income and activity levels have increased and that the charity has a healthy level of unrestricted reserves and cash at the year end. The trustees therefore consider that the charity is able to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months from the date on which these financial statements are approved.

c) Conduit funding

The charity does not include income and expenditure in the SOFA for project partners for whom they act as agent by collecting donations and passing them on. The amount of such income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2022 was £1,960 (2021: £Nil).

d) Income

Income is recognised when the charitable company has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the items of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from the government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charitable company has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

e) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charitable company; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

f) Funds accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charitable company. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charitable company's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charitable company.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

1. Accounting policies (continued)

g) Grants payable

Grants payable are recognised as expenditure on the earlier of a) when the charity has a present obligation to transfer resources; and b) when the charity ceases to control the resource (e.g. via transferring funds to the grant recipient).

h) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

i) Allocation of support and governance costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity, including the costs of complying with constitutional and statutory requirements and any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. These costs have been allocated in full to charitable activities.

j) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

k) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

l) Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the charitable company has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

m) Financial instruments

The charitable company only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently recognised at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

n) Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for its employees. There are no further liabilities other than that already recognised in the SOFA.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

1. Accounting policies (continued)

o) Accounting estimates and key judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

2. Prior period comparatives

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2021 Total £
Income from:			
Donations	116,318	-	116,318
Charitable activities	-	155,547	155,547
Other trading activities	-	2,260	2,260
Investments	-	1,073	1,073
Total income	116,318	158,880	275,198
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	-	1,894	1,894
Charitable activities	64,222	172,029	236,251
Total expenditure	64,222	173,923	238,145
Net income / (expenditure) and net movement in funds	52,096	(15,043)	37,053

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

3. Income from donations

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2022 Total £	2021 Total £
Grants > £5,000				
North Somerset Council	62,438	-	62,438	-
St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community	30,000	-	30,000	35,000
Virgin Care	17,274	-	17,274	6,436
Environment Agency - WEIF	15,000	-	15,000	15,000
Quartet - Covid-19	9,500	-	9,500	4,049
St Monica Trust - Rural Links	-	-	-	30,000
Lottery Building Connections Fund	-	-	-	9,400
Grants < £5,000				
Wesport - Rural Moves	3,921	-	3,921	8,002
Chew Valley Community CIC	3,921	-	3,921	2,781
Quartet - Surviving Winter	3,000	-	3,000	-
Quartet - Bath Half Marathon	1,500	-	1,500	-
Avon & Somerset Police Commissioner	-	-	-	2,400
Quartet - Wessex	-	-	-	1,500
Sperring Trust	-	-	-	750
Groundworks - Tesco	-	-	-	500
Quartet - Rural Links	-	-	-	500
Total income from donations	<u>146,554</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>146,554</u>	<u>116,318</u>

All income from donations in the prior year were restricted.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

4. Income from charitable activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2022 Total £	2021 Total £
Bath & North East Somerset Council	-	75,000	75,000	10,000
Virgin Care	-	68,578	68,578	56,126
Action with Communities in Rural England	-	37,325	37,325	37,337
Curo	-	27,067	27,067	25,456
West of England Combined Authority	-	13,025	13,025	15,623
Second Step	-	8,100	8,100	-
National Association for Voluntary and Community Action	-	4,750	4,750	9,500
Voluntary Action North Somerset	-	4,200	4,200	-
Voscur	-	3,325	3,325	-
Shopmobility South Gloucestershire	-	1,560	1,560	1,505
Total income from charitable activities	-	242,930	242,930	155,547

All income from charitable activities in the prior year was unrestricted.

5. Income from other trading activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2022 Total £	2021 Total £
Oil membership scheme	-	1,910	1,910	2,260

All income from other trading activities in the prior year was unrestricted.

6. Government grants

The charitable company receives government grants, defined as funding from Action with Communities in Rural England (ultimately from DEFRA), Bath and North East Somerset Council, North Somerset Council, and the Environmental Agency to fund charitable activities. The total value of such grants in the period ending 31 March 2022 was £102,325 (2021: £74,137). There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies attaching to these grants in 2021/22.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

7. Total expenditure

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance £	2022 Total £
Staff costs (note 10)	3,659	171,090	2,769	177,518
Training	-	815	-	815
Printing, postage and stationery	-	1,596	-	1,596
Membership and subscriptions	-	5,761	-	5,761
Travel and subsistence	-	4,347	-	4,347
Event costs and room hire	-	5,134	-	5,134
Premises costs	-	-	2,146	2,146
Telephone costs	-	-	4,720	4,720
Computer costs	-	-	11,736	11,736
Project consultants	-	30,352	-	30,352
Project costs	-	3,399	-	3,399
Insurance	-	-	942	942
Accountancy fees	-	-	5,354	5,354
Design and promotion	-	-	516	516
Legal and professional fees	-	-	1,187	1,187
Miscellaneous costs	-	-	255	255
Governance costs	-	-	26	26
Grants payable (note 8)	-	14,780	-	14,780
Sub-total	3,659	237,274	29,651	270,584
Allocation of support and governance costs	-	29,651	(29,651)	-
Total expenditure	3,659	266,925	-	270,584

Total governance costs were £2,966 (2021: £2,760).

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

7. Total expenditure (continued)				
Prior period comparative	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance £	2021 Total £
Staff costs (note 10)	1,894	153,078	7,816	162,788
Training	-	50	-	50
Printing, postage and stationery	-	1,089	-	1,089
Membership and subscriptions	-	5,750	-	5,750
Travel and subsistence	-	1,425	-	1,425
Event costs and room hire	-	128	-	128
Premises costs	-	-	9,212	9,212
Telephone costs	-	-	4,404	4,404
Computer costs	-	-	8,743	8,743
Project consultants	-	15,104	-	15,104
Project costs	-	2,717	-	2,717
Insurance	-	-	1,099	1,099
Accountancy fees	-	-	5,919	5,919
Design and promotion	-	-	104	104
Recruitment costs	-	-	148	148
Miscellaneous costs	-	-	555	555
Grants payable (note 8)	-	14,500	-	14,500
Depreciation	-	-	1,766	1,766
Loss on disposal of fixed asset	-	-	2,644	2,644
Sub-total	1,894	193,841	42,410	238,145
Allocation of support and governance costs	-	42,410	(42,410)	-
Total expenditure	<u>1,894</u>	<u>236,251</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>238,145</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

8. Grants payable

	2022	2021
	£	£
Bristol Avon River	12,900	12,680
Avon Wildlife Trust	1,600	1,370
Bleadon Covid-19 Support Community Grant	180	-
Land Yeo Friends	100	-
	-	450
	<u>14,780</u>	<u>14,500</u>

All grants and donations payable were paid to further charitable activities. No support costs were allocated to these grants.

9. Net movement in funds

This is stated after charging:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Depreciation	-	1,766
Operating lease payments	-	6,033
Trustees' indemnity insurance	Nil	Nil
Trustees' remuneration	Nil	Nil
Trustees' reimbursed expenses	Nil	Nil
Independent examiner's fees:		
▪ Independent examination	2,940	2,760
▪ Other services	2,584	3,111
	<u>2,584</u>	<u>3,111</u>

10. Staff costs and numbers

Staff costs were as follows:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Salaries and wages	167,350	153,287
Social security costs	6,025	4,333
Pension costs	4,143	5,168
	<u>177,518</u>	<u>162,788</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

10. Staff costs and numbers (continued)

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the year.

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the Executive Director. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £39,445 (2021: £37,117).

Total termination and redundancy payments made in the year were £Nil (2021: £527).

	2022	2021
	No.	No.
Average head count	<u><u>15</u></u>	<u><u>14</u></u>

11. Taxation

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

12. Debtors

	2022	2021
	£	£
Trade debtors	33,173	6,459
Accrued income	5,405	2,769
Other debtors	<u>2,000</u>	<u>2,953</u>
	<u><u>40,578</u></u>	<u><u>12,181</u></u>

13. Creditors : amounts due within 1 year

	2022	2021
	£	£
Trade creditors	3,147	2,517
Accruals	5,954	10,588
Conduit funding	1,960	-
Other creditors	<u>1,346</u>	<u>730</u>
	<u><u>12,407</u></u>	<u><u>13,835</u></u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

14. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	Unrestricted funds £	Total funds £
Current assets	107,231	70,000	108,217	285,448
Current liabilities	-	-	(12,407)	(12,407)
Net assets at 31 March 2022	<u>107,231</u>	<u>70,000</u>	<u>95,810</u>	<u>273,041</u>
Prior period comparative	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	Unrestricted funds £	Total funds £
Current assets	79,209	-	85,966	165,175
Current liabilities	-	-	(13,835)	(13,835)
Net assets at 31 March 2021	<u>79,209</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>72,131</u>	<u>151,340</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

15. Movements in funds

	At 1 April 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2022 £
Restricted funds					
St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact	32,022	30,000	(18,610)	-	43,412
North Somerset - Community Hubs Programme	-	62,438	(26,874)	-	35,564
Chew Valley Community CIC	15,301	3,921	(24)	-	19,198
Virgin Care - Digital Healthcare Trial	-	7,000	-	-	7,000
Quartet - Bath Half Marathon	-	1,500	(616)	-	884
St Monica Trust - Rural Links	18,661	-	(18,125)	-	536
Avon & Somerset Police Commissioner	2,400	-	(1,950)	-	450
Quartet - Rural Links	500	-	(313)	-	187
Lottery Building Connections Fund	4,209	-	(4,229)	20	-
Virgin Care - B&NES Vaccination Project	3,574	10,274	(15,609)	1,761	-
Quartet - Wessex (Chew Chat)	1,037	-	(1,037)	-	-
Quartet - Events	755	-	(760)	5	-
Sperring Trust	750	-	(750)	-	-
EA - Water Environment Improvement Fund	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	-
Quartet - Covid-19	-	9,500	(9,500)	-	-
Wesport - Rural Moves	-	3,921	(4,126)	205	-
Quartet - Surviving Winter	-	3,000	(3,000)	-	-
Total restricted funds	79,209	146,554	(120,523)	1,991	107,231
Unrestricted funds					
<i>Designated funds:</i>					
B&NES	-	-	-	70,000	70,000
<i>Total designated funds</i>	-	-	-	70,000	70,000
General funds	72,131	245,731	(150,061)	(71,991)	95,810
Total unrestricted funds	72,131	245,731	(150,061)	(1,991)	165,810
Total funds	151,340	392,285	(270,584)	-	273,041

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

15. Movements in funds (continued)

Prior period comparative	At 1 April 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2021 £
Restricted funds					
St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact	-	35,000	(2,978)	-	32,022
St Monica Trust - Rural Links	11,138	30,000	(22,477)	-	18,661
Chew Valley Community CIC	14,125	2,781	(1,605)	-	15,301
Lottery Building Connections Fund	-	9,400	(5,191)	-	4,209
Virgin Care - B&NES Vaccination Project	-	6,436	(2,862)	-	3,574
Avon & Somerset Police Commissioner	-	2,400	-	-	2,400
Quartet - Wessex (Chew Chat)	-	1,500	(463)	-	1,037
Quartet - Events	755	-	-	-	755
Sperring Trust	-	750	-	-	750
EA - Water Environment Improvement Fund	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	-
Wesport - Rural Moves	-	8,002	(8,002)	-	-
Quartet - Rural Links	-	500	-	-	500
Quartet - Surviving Winter	1,095	-	(1,095)	-	-
Quartet - Covid-19	-	4,049	(4,049)	-	-
Groundworks - Tesco (Chew Chat)	-	500	(500)	-	-
Total restricted funds	27,113	116,318	(64,222)	-	79,209
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	87,174	158,880	(173,923)	-	72,131
Total unrestricted funds	87,174	155,838	(173,923)	-	72,131
Total funds	114,287	272,156	(238,145)	-	151,340

Purposes of restricted funds

St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact

Funding to support community engagement among older people in the Woodspring area of North Somerset – as part of a programme covering the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group area.

North Somerset - Community Hubs Programme

Funding to work with 'community hubs' in rural areas across North Somerset, including a programme of training to help people engage with IT, and enabling hubs to improve their facilities.

Chew Valley Community CIC

Funding from Chew Valley Community CIC is held for the development of community transport services in the Chew Valley and surrounding area.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

15. Movements in funds (continued)

Purposes of restricted funds

Virgin Care - Digital Healthcare Trial

Funding to train Village Agents to install and support equipment in the homes of users participating in the trial, provide feedback, and undertake an evaluation of impact on users, with the aim of reducing hospital admissions, loneliness and anxiety.

Quartet - Bath Half Marathon

Funding for walk leaders to provide a programme of walks for older people most affected by the pandemic, aiming to help prevent falls and enhance mental and physical wellbeing.

St Monica Trust - Rural Links

St Monica Trust has funded WERN to set up "Rural Links" - a network of activities providing engagement and learning opportunities with a focus on health and wellbeing, and reducing social isolation and loneliness.

Avon & Somerset Police Commissioner

Funding for a programme of refresher training for older drivers in rural areas of B&NES and North Somerset, organised by the Village Agents in association with the police.

Quartet - Rural Links

A special award from Quartet for Rural Links' Music project. The grant is intended to help the development of the project once current pandemic restrictions are lifted.

Lottery Building Connections Fund

Funding as part of a national programme to address loneliness and isolation. WERN's project aims to work with rural communities to develop opportunities for older people to engage in North Somerset.

Virgin Care - B&NES Vaccination Project

Funding for WERN to manage volunteer support for the major Covid-19 vaccination programme run by the Three Rivers Primary Care Network in Midsomer Norton.

Quartet - Wessex (Chew Chat)

Funding to enable Chew Chat, a local voluntary group, develop social activities for older people in Chew Magna and environs.

Quartet - Events

Grants received through Quartet to fund events for older people to promote social inclusion.

Sperring Trust

This funding supports the recruitment of an additional Village Agent to serve Midsomer Norton and environs.

EA - Water Environment Improvement Fund

Water Environment Improvement Funding from Environment Agency for water management improvements in the Bristol Avon catchment area. WERN managed the grant process, making awards to three local projects.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

15. Movements in funds (continued)

Purposes of restricted funds

Quartet - Covid-19

A grant to help projects meet the costs of providing services during the pandemic. The funding supported our two Village Agent projects and helped users of our Rural Links services to access digitally.

Wesport - Rural Moves

A programme of gentle exercise for older residents in association with B&NES Village Agents and Rural Links, run on-line with funding from Sport England.

Quartet - Surviving Winter

Funding for WERN's Community Oil buying scheme, to enable us to maintain free memberships for older clients with limited means.

Purposes of designated funds

B&NES

Funds to extend the Village Agent service to Peasedown St John and surrounding area for two years from December 2021, and Combe Down and Bathavon areas for one year from January 2022.

Transfers

Transfers to restricted funds are to cover overspends on restricted projects.

16. Related parties

WERN is a founder member of West of England Civil Society Partnership CIC (WoE CS). Chris Head, executive director of WERN is also a director of WoE CS. During the year, WERN received £1,960 of conduit funding from the organisation, (2021: £Nil). These funds will be transferred to beneficiaries in the following period.

There were no related party transactions during the prior year.

WEST OF ENGLAND RURAL NETWORK

England & Wales - Charity number 1146165

Accounts

Company no. 07956732
Charity no. 1146165

West of England Rural Network
Report and Unaudited Financial
Statements
31 March 2021

West of England Rural Network

Reference and administrative details

For the year ended 31 March 2021

Company number	07956732
Charity number	1146165
Registered office	5th Floor, Mariner House 62 Prince Street Bristol BS1 4QD
Operational address	PO Box 1237 Bristol BS40 8WJ
Trustees	Trustees, who are also directors under company law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows: Georgina Bigg Susan McKay Laura Penny Frances Tyson Peter Tyzack
Executive director	Chris Head
Company secretary	Chris Head
Bankers	Cambridge & Counties Bank Charnwood Court 5b New Walk Leicester LE1 6TE The Co-operative Bank PO Box 250 Delf House Skelmersdale WN8 6WT Monmouthshire Building Society Monmouthshire House John Frost Square Newport South Wales NP20 1PX
Independent examiners	Godfrey Wilson Limited Chartered accountants and statutory auditors 5th Floor, Mariner House 62 Prince Street Bristol BS1 4QD

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2021

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities (effective from January 2019).

Objectives and activities

West of England Rural Network's objects are:

To promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community in the West of England (being areas of North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire) and in particular that of the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage, the advancement of citizenship or community development, the advancement of education or by pursuing any other charitable purposes.

West of England Rural Network's aims and intended impacts

The aim of the West of England Rural Network is to work with communities, organisations, groups and individuals across the West of England to improve the quality of life for local communities, particularly in the rural areas, by understanding their needs, working with them towards improving services to achieve a sustainable and viable future.

The West of England Rural Network champions the goal of sustainable communities, and acts as "rural advocate" within the area, as part of the wider family of Rural Community Councils across England and the South West. Our strategic principles and aims are:

- Supporting and encouraging community-led action and strong local governance;
- Increasing long-term sustainability of local community life; and
- Influencing policies and services to achieve equity for rural communities.

Public benefit statement

The trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when establishing and reviewing its aims and objectives, and for planning future activities.

In line with guidance from the Charity Commission, the trustees are satisfied that the West of England Rural Network continues to have significant charitable purpose, and delivers very tangible public benefit through its involvement in the following areas of its activities:

- 1 Strategic Support** - we have supported, influenced and informed other organisations and bodies where a specialist rural input is required in order to achieve equity for people living in rural communities.
- 2 Broadband and Digital Communication** - by working with rural communities and groups we are helping to ensure that there is both adequate broadband provision throughout the rural area in addition to supporting individuals and communities in the use of appropriate technology and access to the internet.
- 3 Access to Services and Community Transport** – we continue to support communities in the development of local services and to identify and analyse local issues. We have supported community transport groups, who in turn assist vulnerable and isolated individuals.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2021

- 4 **Fuel Poverty** - we support measures to combat and improve awareness of fuel poverty in rural communities which will seek to relieve those in need, by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage.
- 5 **Village Halls and Community Assets** – we understand and value the importance to communities of their own assets. Through the facilitation and support of communities we have assisted in proactive engagement and action planning to create sustainable communities helping them maintain and run these assets on a voluntary basis.
- 6 **Village Agents** - by focusing on the needs of isolated and vulnerable people who have not in the past asked for assistance, the Village Agents have identified and linked people with organisations and services who are able to support and help.
- 7 **Social Enterprise Support and Funding Advice** - through providing business planning support, training and funding advice for projects in rural areas, we support community based social enterprises to become sustainable economically.

Achievements and performance

In what has been an exceptional year our organisation, its staff, trustees and volunteers have constantly adapted and responded to the developing pandemic. Our development plans for 2020 – 21 were put on hold and by re-focusing our activities we were able to meet and exceed our charitable aims and objectives giving us a renewed purpose and vision for the coming year.

This year has seen a significant increase in our partnership working (voluntary sector, health and local authorities) as well as a complete change for how we have organisationally operated and communicated. We are now a virtual organisation but this has significantly increased the contact we have with clients, staff, partners and other colleagues.

This report of our achievements and performance is set within this external operating context.

WERN has maintained a wide portfolio of activities and has built on its active role in the voluntary and community sector throughout the West of England. Our small organisation is well networked and highly regarded by partners. We have continued to maintain and develop our role as rural specialists as no other organisation within the West of England region provides this service.

The key achievements in the period of this report are:

- Over the year our Village Agents moved to an online (telephone and video) service and were able to maintain activity in 25 parishes in B&NES and through the new Wellbeing Hub. The project is funded by Virgin Care as part of the adult social care commission with B&NES Council.
- Recruitment of our B&NES Social Prescribing Link Worker (a partnership project with Developing Health and Independence) commenced before the pandemic and started in the middle of the reporting period but in a virtual capacity. This exciting project is now developing and increasing its reach.
- The Rural Links project supported by St Monica Trust changed during the year to provide regular contact and support with the older isolated people in the Chew and Somer Valleys in the rural part of Bath & North East Somerset who had been participants in the programme. This regular contact and checking-in helped to identify issues and concerns which we were able to escalate to the appropriate level.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2021

- The partnership project with Curo to provide five Village Agents who operate across rural North Somerset as part of the district wide Community Connect project also went online and was also a critical link for rurally isolated and vulnerable older people.
- Our work as programme managers for the West of England LEADER programme scaled down during the year as we continued to close the programme down.
- We continued to directly support three community transport schemes in South Gloucestershire and Bath & North East Somerset and, in partnership with Voscur, have created a West of England Community Transport group which is successfully engaging with the WECA to influence policy and funding.
- Village Halls are a vital community owned asset across the West of England. Over the year, and with the support of ACRE, we have been a vital source of information and guidance supporting the work of Village Hall committees in relation to the rules and regulations coming from Government. We have held a number of online sessions throughout the year and individually supported a number of halls.
- Our Community Oil Buying Scheme continues to grow and now has 200 members and last year helped members order over 311,125 litres of heating oil collectively saving them at least £23,200. Building on previous years partnership with Quartet Community Foundation we were again able to offer free membership to the Community Oil Buying Scheme to the over 60s thus making an important contribution to alleviating fuel poverty.
- During the early stages of the pandemic the Department for Culture Media and Sport established the VCSEP (Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership) led by British Red Cross nationally but with local representation. As a West of England infrastructure body we were appointed for the area and acted as the conduit to both cascade information and to escalate requests for support and assistance.
- We have continued to work with our voluntary sector infrastructure partners under the umbrella of the West of England Civil Society Partnership CIC primarily engaging with the Bristol, North Somerset South Gloucestershire Integrated Care System. Through the partnership, our Executive Director supports the Building Better Opportunities programme (European Social Fund) project, which increases social inclusion for those furthest from work.
- During the year we worked along with other organisations locally and nationally to address the issues highlighted by the Black Lives Matter movement. The debate this triggered and the challenges presented have been incorporated into our ways of working and have emphasised the need to actively address equalities at all levels and in all forms.

Details of use of volunteers

West of England Rural Network currently uses volunteers in the management of the organisation. In addition, most of the activities and projects we are involved in are run by, and engage with volunteers. The Rural Links project now encourages formal volunteering. We continue to work with and support organisations who use volunteers such as community transport groups and village halls.

During the pandemic we were approached to provide volunteer support for a community vaccination centre operated by the Three Valley Health Care Primary Care Network in B&NES. We were quickly able to recruit and task 90 volunteers who provided over 7,000 hours of volunteer support during which over 40,000 vaccinations were delivered.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2021

Financial review

Reserves policy

The trustees regularly consider the reserves held by the charity, and have set a minimum of three months working capital as a sufficient reserve level. As at the end of March 2021 unrestricted funds of £72,131 were held in reserves. The balance is equivalent to approximately three months planned expenditure.

Employee pension scheme

All eligible qualifying staff will be automatically enrolled on to the National Employment Savings Trust scheme.

West of England Rural Network is part of the statutory auto-enrolment scheme and has enrolled with National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) as its provider. Staff have the right to opt-out of this scheme.

After a qualifying period, WERN offers all staff access to a defined contribution pension scheme.

Main sources of funding

Our funding has come from a number of sources this year:

- **ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England)** as part of the national Rural Community Council agreement with Department of the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs;
- **Curo** for village agents in North Somerset;
- **St Monica's Trust** for Rural Links Project and North Somerset Community Development;
- **West of England Combined Authority** acting as the accountable body for the West of England LEADER programme;
- **Virgin Care Ltd** for Village Agents in B&NES;
- **The Community Fund (formerly the BIG Lottery)** for Rural Connections;
- **Quartet Community Foundation** for the Community Oil buying scheme and various Village Agent/Rural Link projects; and
- **NAVCA** as part of the Voluntary Community Sector Emergency Partnership.

How expenditure has supported charitable objectives

The income of West of England Rural Network is applied solely towards the fulfilment of the charitable objects.

Plans for the future

Covid-19

This trustees report has been prepared within the context of the global Covid-19 pandemic and along with all organisations in the civic, public and private sectors we have had to and continue to respond to the emergency, to plan for the future and to keep our staff safe at all times.

Over the last 18 months specific and targeted funding streams have been made available to support the wider needs of the UK population, NHS and communities in general. WERN has been able to secure funding to support these short-term pieces of work but it is clear that we are entering a new recovery phase and that funding (and particularly medium/long term funding) will again prove to be competitive.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2021

As a result, our statement of objectives for the forthcoming year will be framed within this context and other emerging situations such as the continuing and urgent need to address climate change and the impacts of leaving the EU.

Main objectives for the next year

Although the trustees and staff team held a planning day in the autumn of 2019 much of the detailed implementation of this planned for 2020 – 21 has inevitably been put on hold. Due to the restrictions of the pandemic and the need to be agile whilst consolidating existing and new emerging projects the trustees did not hold a planning day but instead met virtually on a regular basis with the staff team.

Our **Village Agent** programme is seen as one of our key front-line delivery activities and having now been successful in both North Somerset and B&NES we will look to build on this model of wellbeing support with the providers of Adult and Social Care across the region particularly focusing on the impact of isolation and loneliness. The crisis has highlighted how important and integral this service has been for the beneficiaries and agencies we work with.

We will be developing and building on the work of our **Social Prescribing Link Worker** service for the rural part of B&NES in partnership with DHI. This new service creates a strong link between the GP network and our existing Village Agent service.

Through our membership of Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) we are able to access resources and information to actively work with and support **Village Hall** committees in their work following the Covid-19 restrictions. This presents us with further opportunities to develop this work with these important community owned assets.

The pandemic meant our **Rural Links** project with St Monica Trust needed to change in its method of delivery. As we emerge into recovery mode we will be working to ensure this programme complements and enhances the work of the Village Agents and adds additional capacity and dimension to our wellbeing activities in rural areas. Additionally, we are looking to develop a new service to work with other small local groups to deliver activities.

We will look to build on the strong start of our **North Somerset Asset Based Community Development** project and already having engaged with communities as a natural progression of the Rural Connections and Village Agent project, we are well placed to expand this work.

The **Community Oil Buying Scheme** continues to provide a practical way of supporting action on fuel poverty in the rural area. However, we are critically aware of the need to actively address climate change and carbon reduction. During the year we will be exploring potential partnership projects and preparing for new funding schemes from Government.

Along with this we will work to help rural communities address the **impact of climate change** we will be looking to develop a new project to help households move from oil to other forms of greener heating methods, low carbon travel and different ways of working.

The successful **LEADER** programme for the rural West of England which created a funding programme to support small scale, grass root organisations and businesses to create economic activity in the rural areas is now drawing to a close.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2021

However, we will continue to work with partners locally and nationally to ensure that future strategic funding decisions can be made and that rural enterprises and communities can be actively supported in their aspirations. Into the future it is likely that this fund will be replaced by the **UK Shared Prosperity Fund** and we must make sure that rural areas receive a fair and equitable part of this fund. Already we have helped to support a Community Renewal Fund bid to government and our presence across the wider West of England helps to achieve our organisational aims.

Our work with partner VCS infrastructure organisations will continue to play an important part in making sure the voice of rural communities is heard, included and incorporated within the post Covid-19 landscape. Through the **West of England Civil Society Partnership**, we will help to support rural organisation and communities to understand and take advantage of the move towards more combined working between the unitary authorities and health agencies.

Structure, governance and management

Legal status, date of incorporation and date of charity registration

The organisation is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 20th February 2012 and its objects and powers are set out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The organisation was registered at the Charity Commission on 29th February 2012.

Details of governing document

The articles prohibit any distribution of funds to trustees other than for proper reimbursement of costs incurred on the company's business.

Method of recruiting and appointing new trustees

In accordance with the articles at the first annual general meeting all the trustees retired and stood for re-appointment. At each subsequent annual general meeting one-third of the trustees must retire from office. Under a bye law adopted by the board in December 2018, trustees can only serve for three years and must then retire. They may stand for re-election for up to a third term but are not eligible for subsequent re-election thereafter.

The trustees have appointed a chair, and membership is open to other individuals. trustees may appoint additional individuals who can bring specific skills to the charity. Formal induction and training for any new trustees is provided as required.

Organisational structure and decision making

The trustees meet regularly to discuss the strategic direction of the charity, ensure its core aims and objects are being met in the most efficient way, and to take account of any risks to the charity and make sure all legal obligations are satisfied.

Outside these meetings, the day to day business of the charity is handled by the executive director and other staff.

Related parties

There are no subsidiaries or charities controlled by the same trustees. All trustees have completed a declaration of interests form so that potential related parties can be identified.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2021

The West of England Rural Network is a named asset locked body in the newly formed West of England Civil Society Partnership CIC, a community interest company whose other asset locked bodies are The Care Forum, Voscur, Wesport, CVS South Gloucestershire, Voluntary Action North Somerset and B&NES Third Sector Group. The Executive Director of the West of England Rural Network is a director of the CIC. Although the partnership meets regularly, at the year end the West of England Civil Society Partnership had not undertaken any activity and as such there were no related party transactions.

Risk statement

The trustees have considered the major risks faced by the charity and have put in place a risk register alongside systems and controls to mitigate them. Risks are regularly monitored using the risk register at trustee meetings.

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

The trustees (who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the charitable company guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £10 to the assets of the charitable company in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 March 2021 was 5. The trustees are members of the charitable company but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charitable company.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2021

Independent examiners

Godfrey Wilson Limited were re-appointed as examiners to the charitable company during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the trustees on 26 July 2021 and signed on their behalf by

FM TYSON

Frances Tyson - Chair

Independent examiner's report

To the members of

West of England Rural Network

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of West of England Rural Network (the charitable company) for the year ended 31 March 2021, which are set out on pages 12 to 26.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charitable company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the charitable company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charitable company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charitable company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), which is one of the listed bodies.

Godfrey Wilson Limited also provides payroll services to the charitable company. I confirm that as a member of the ICAEW I am subject to the FRC's Revised Ethical Standard 2016, which I have applied with respect to this engagement.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

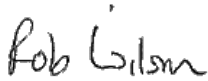
- (1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the charitable company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- (2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- (3) the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- (4) the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Independent examiner's report

To the members of

West of England Rural Network

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Date: 6 August 2021

Rob Wilson FCA

Member of the ICAEW

For and on behalf of:

Godfrey Wilson Limited

Chartered accountants and statutory auditors

5th Floor Mariner House

62 Prince Street

Bristol

BS1 4QD

West of England Rural Network

Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2021 Total £	2020 Total £
Income from:					
Donations	3	116,318	-	116,318	59,227
Charitable activities	4	-	155,547	155,547	152,195
Other trading activities	5	-	2,260	2,260	2,400
Investments		-	1,073	1,073	1,214
Total income		<u>116,318</u>	<u>158,880</u>	<u>275,198</u>	<u>215,036</u>
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	1,894	1,894	2,060
Charitable activities		<u>64,222</u>	<u>172,029</u>	<u>236,251</u>	<u>230,974</u>
Total expenditure	7	<u>64,222</u>	<u>173,923</u>	<u>238,145</u>	<u>233,034</u>
Net income / (expenditure)		52,096	(15,043)	37,053	(17,998)
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	9	52,096	(15,043)	37,053	(17,998)
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		<u>27,113</u>	<u>87,174</u>	<u>114,287</u>	<u>132,285</u>
Total funds carried forward		<u><u>79,209</u></u>	<u><u>72,131</u></u>	<u><u>151,340</u></u>	<u><u>114,287</u></u>

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in note 16 to the accounts.

West of England Rural Network

Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2021

	Note	£	2021 £	2020 £
Fixed assets				
Tangible fixed assets	12		-	12,660
Current assets				
Debtors	13	12,181		16,561
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>152,994</u>		<u>90,873</u>
		165,175		107,434
Liabilities				
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year	14	<u>(13,835)</u>		<u>(5,807)</u>
Net current assets			<u>151,340</u>	<u>101,627</u>
Net assets	15		<u><u>151,340</u></u>	<u><u>114,287</u></u>
Funds				
Restricted funds	16		79,209	27,113
Unrestricted funds			<u>72,131</u>	<u>87,174</u>
Total charity funds			<u><u>151,340</u></u>	<u><u>114,287</u></u>

The directors are satisfied that the company is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) relating to the audit of the financial statements for the year by virtue of section 477(2), and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 476 of the Act.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- (i) ensuring that the Company keeps proper accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act; and
- (ii) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of section 393, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

Approved by the trustees on 26 July 2021 and signed on their behalf by

FM Tyson

Frances Tyson - Chair

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities in preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

West of England Rural Network meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

b) Going concern basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared on the assumption that the charity is able to continue as a going concern. The trustees have considered whether the Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the charity's current and future financial position but are satisfied that both income and activity levels have increased and that the charity has a healthy level of unrestricted reserves and cash at the year end. The trustees therefore consider that the charity is able to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months from the date on which these financial statements are approved.

c) Conduit funding

The charity does not include income and expenditure in the SOFA for project partners for whom they act as agent by collecting donations and passing them on. The amount of such income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021 was £nil (2020: £7,450).

d) Income

Income is recognised when the charitable company has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the items of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from the government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charitable company has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

e) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charitable company; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

f) Funds accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charitable company. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charitable company's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charitable company.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

1. Accounting policies (continued)

g) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

h) Allocation of support and governance costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity, including the costs of complying with constitutional and statutory requirements and any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. These costs have been allocated between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities on the following basis:

	2021	2020
Charitable activities	100%	100%
Raising funds	0%	0%

i) Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are as follows:

Motor vehicles	5 years
----------------	---------

Items of equipment are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £1,000.

j) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

k) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

l) Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the charitable company has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

m) Financial instruments

The charitable company only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently recognised at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

1. Accounting policies (continued)

n) Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for its employees. There are no further liabilities other than that already recognised in the SOFA.

o) Accounting estimates and key judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

The key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements are depreciation as described in note 1 (i).

2. Prior period comparatives

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2020 Total £
Income from:			
Donations	59,198	29	59,227
Charitable activities	-	152,195	152,195
Other trading activities	-	2,400	2,400
Investments	-	1,214	1,214
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total income	59,198	155,838	215,036
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	-	2,060	2,060
Charitable activities	53,982	176,992	230,974
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total expenditure	53,982	179,052	233,034
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net income / (expenditure) and net movement in funds	5,216	(23,214)	(17,998)
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

3. Income from donations

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2021 Total £
Grants > £5,000			
St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community	35,000	-	35,000
St Monica Trust - Rural Links	30,000	-	30,000
Environment Agency - WEIF	15,000	-	15,000
Lottery Building Connections Fund	9,400	-	9,400
Wesport - Rural Moves	8,002	-	8,002
Virgin Care	6,436	-	6,436
Grants < £5,000			
Quartet - Covid-19	4,049	-	4,049
Chew Valley Community CIC	2,781	-	2,781
Avon & Somerset Police Commissioner	2,400	-	2,400
Quartet - Wessex	1,500	-	1,500
Sperring Trust	750	-	750
Groundworks - Tesco	500	-	500
Quartet - Rural Links	500	-	500
Total income from donations	116,318	-	116,318
Prior period comparative:			2020
	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total £
Grants > £5,000			
St Monica Trust	30,000	-	30,000
Lottery Building Connections Fund	21,000	-	21,000
Grants < £5,000			
Chew Valley Community CIC	3,318	-	3,318
Quartet Express Fund - Surviving Winter	1,800	-	1,800
Quartet - St Monica's Foundation - Events	580	-	580
Care Forum - Healthwatch	2,500	-	2,500
Other donations			
Voluntary donations	-	29	29
Total income from donations	59,198	29	59,227

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

4. Income from charitable activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2021 Total £	2020 Total £
Virgin Care	-	56,126	56,126	30,300
Action with Communities in Rural England	-	37,337	37,337	37,605
Curo	-	25,456	25,456	28,800
West of England Combined Authority	-	15,623	15,623	52,708
Bath & North East Somerset Council	-	10,000	10,000	-
National Association for Voluntary and Community Action	-	9,500	9,500	-
Shopmobility South Gloucestershire	-	1,505	1,505	2,160
Other consultancy < £200	-	-	-	572
Other income	-	-	-	50
Total income from charitable activities	-	155,547	155,547	152,195

All income from charitable activities in the prior year was unrestricted.

5. Income from other trading activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2021 Total £	2020 Total £
Oil membership scheme	-	2,260	2,260	2,400

All income from other trading activities in the prior year was unrestricted.

6. Government grants

The charitable company receives government grants, defined as funding from Action with Communities in Rural England (DEFRA), The Community Fund, Avon and Somerset Police Commissioner and Bath and North East Somerset Council to fund charitable activities. The total value of such grants in the period ending 31 March 2021 was £74,137 (2020: £57,325). There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies attaching to these grants in 2020/21.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

7. Total expenditure

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance £	2021 Total £
Staff costs (note 10)	1,894	153,078	7,816	162,788
Training	-	50	-	50
Printing, postage and stationery	-	1,089	-	1,089
Membership and subscriptions	-	5,750	-	5,750
Travel and subsistence	-	1,425	-	1,425
Event costs and room hire	-	128	-	128
Premises costs	-	-	9,212	9,212
Telephone costs	-	-	4,404	4,404
Computer costs	-	-	8,743	8,743
Project consultants	-	15,104	-	15,104
Project costs	-	2,717	-	2,717
Insurance	-	-	1,099	1,099
Accountancy fees	-	-	5,919	5,919
Design and promotion	-	-	104	104
Recruitment costs	-	-	148	148
Miscellaneous costs	-	-	555	555
Grants payable (note 8)	-	14,500	-	14,500
Depreciation	-	-	1,766	1,766
Loss on disposal of fixed asset	-	-	2,644	2,644
Sub-total	1,894	193,841	42,410	238,145
Allocation of support and governance costs	-	42,410	(42,410)	-
Total expenditure	1,894	236,251	-	238,145

Total governance costs were £2,760 (2020: £2,565).

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

7. Total expenditure (continued)

Prior period comparative	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance £	2020 Total £
Staff costs (note 10)	2,060	156,562	9,642	168,264
Training	-	1,457	-	1,457
Printing, postage and stationery	-	1,571	-	1,571
Membership and subscriptions	-	4,310	-	4,310
Travel and subsistence	-	9,294	-	9,294
Event costs and room hire	-	9,686	-	9,686
Premises costs	-	-	9,949	9,949
Telephone costs	-	-	3,464	3,464
Computer costs	-	-	4,752	4,752
Project consultants	-	1,990	-	1,990
Project costs	-	1,622	-	1,622
Insurance	-	-	1,004	1,004
Accountancy fees	-	-	6,314	6,314
Design and promotion	-	-	1,099	1,099
Recruitment costs	-	-	372	372
Miscellaneous costs	-	-	393	393
Conferences	-	-	655	655
Governance costs	-	-	1,005	1,005
Grants payable (note 8)	-	2,300	-	2,300
Depreciation	-	-	3,533	3,533
Sub-total	2,060	188,792	42,182	233,034
Allocation of support and governance costs	-	42,182	(42,182)	-
Total expenditure	<u>2,060</u>	<u>230,974</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>233,034</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

8. Grants payable

	2021 £	2020 £
Bristol Avon River	12,680	-
Avon Wildlife Trust	1,370	-
Land Yeo Friends	450	-
West of England CS - start up contribution	-	1,500
ACRE Network development plan	-	800
	<u>14,500</u>	<u>2,300</u>

All grants and donations payable were paid to further charitable activities. No support costs were allocated to these grants.

9. Net movement in funds

This is stated after charging:

	2021 £	2020 £
Depreciation	1,766	3,533
Operating lease payments	6,033	7,402
Trustees' indemnity insurance	Nil	Nil
Trustees' remuneration	Nil	Nil
Trustees' reimbursed expenses	Nil	Nil
Independent examiner's fees:		
▪ Independent examination	2,760	1,560
▪ Other services	3,111	2,487
	<u>3,111</u>	<u>2,487</u>

10. Staff costs and numbers

Staff costs were as follows:

	2021 £	2020 £
Salaries and wages	153,287	159,032
Social security costs	4,333	4,860
Pension costs	5,168	4,372
	<u>162,788</u>	<u>168,264</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

10. Staff costs and numbers (continued)

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the year.

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the Executive Director. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £37,117 (2020: £35,567).

Total termination and redundancy payments made in the year were £527 (2020: £nil).

	2021	2020
	No.	No.
Average head count	<u><u>14</u></u>	<u><u>16</u></u>

11. Taxation

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

12. Tangible fixed assets

	Motor vehicles
	£
Cost	
At 1 April 2020	17,665
Additions in year	-
Disposals	<u>(17,665)</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>-</u>
Depreciation	
At 1 April 2020	5,005
Charge for the year	1,766
On disposals	<u>(6,771)</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>-</u>
Net book value	
At 31 March 2021	<u><u>-</u></u>
At 31 March 2020	<u><u>12,660</u></u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

13. Debtors

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade debtors	6,459	2,083
Accrued income	2,769	12,268
Prepayments	-	2,210
Other debtors	2,953	-
	<u>12,181</u>	<u>16,561</u>

14. Creditors : amounts due within 1 year

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade creditors	2,517	1,559
Accruals	11,318	4,248
	<u>13,835</u>	<u>5,807</u>

15. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Restricted funds £	Unrestricted funds £	Total funds £
Current assets	79,209	85,966	165,175
Current liabilities	-	(13,835)	(13,835)
Net assets at 31 March 2021	<u>79,209</u>	<u>72,131</u>	<u>151,340</u>

Prior period comparative

	Restricted funds £	Unrestricted funds £	Total funds £
Tangible fixed assets	-	12,660	12,660
Current assets	27,113	80,321	107,434
Current liabilities	-	(5,807)	(5,807)
Net assets at 31 March 2020	<u>27,113</u>	<u>87,174</u>	<u>114,287</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

16. Movements in funds

	At 1 April 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	At 31 March 2021 £
Restricted funds				
Chew Valley Community CIC	14,125	2,781	(1,605)	15,301
St Monica Trust - Rural Links	11,138	30,000	(22,477)	18,661
St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact	-	35,000	(2,978)	32,022
Lottery Building Connections Fund	-	9,400	(5,191)	4,209
Wesport - Rural Moves	-	8,002	(8,002)	-
Virgin Care	-	6,436	(2,862)	3,574
Avon & Somerset Police Commissioner	-	2,400	-	2,400
Groundworks - Tesco (Chew Chat)	-	500	(500)	-
Quartet - Surviving Winter	1,095	-	(1,095)	-
Quartet - Rural Links	-	500	-	500
Quartet - Wessex (Chew Chat)	-	1,500	(463)	1,037
Quartet - Events	755	-	-	755
Quartet - Covid-19	-	4,049	(4,049)	-
Sperring Trust	-	750	-	750
EA - Water Environment Improvement Fund	-	15,000	(15,000)	-
Total restricted funds	<u>27,113</u>	<u>116,318</u>	<u>(64,222)</u>	<u>79,209</u>
Unrestricted funds				
General funds	<u>87,174</u>	<u>158,880</u>	<u>(173,923)</u>	<u>72,131</u>
Total unrestricted funds	<u>87,174</u>	<u>158,880</u>	<u>(173,923)</u>	<u>72,131</u>
Total funds	<u><u>114,287</u></u>	<u><u>275,198</u></u>	<u><u>(238,145)</u></u>	<u><u>151,340</u></u>

Purposes of restricted funds

Chew Valley Community CIC

Funding from Chew Valley Community CIC is held for the development of community transport services in the Chew Valley and surrounding area.

St Monica Trust - Rural Links

St Monica Trust has funded WERN to set up "Rural Links" - a network of activities providing engagement and learning opportunities with a focus on health and wellbeing, and reducing social isolation and loneliness.

St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact

Funding to support community engagement among older people in the Woodspring area of North Somerset – as part of a programme covering the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group area.

Lottery Building Connections Fund

Funding as part of a national programme to address loneliness and isolation. WERN's project aims to work with rural communities to develop opportunities for older people to engage in North Somerset. The programme has been extended to summer 2021 in view of the pandemic.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

16. Movements in funds (continued)

Wesport - Rural Moves

A programme of gentle exercise for older residents in association with B&NES Village Agents and Rural Links, run on-line with funding from Sport England.

Virgin Care

Funding for WERN to manage volunteer support for the major Covid-19 vaccination programme run by the Three Rivers Primary Care Network in Midsomer Norton.

Avon & Somerset Police Commissioner

Funding for a programme of refresher training for older drivers in rural areas of B&NES and North Somerset organised by the Village Agents in association with the police.

Groundworks - Tesco (Chew Chat)

A small grant to support social activities for older people in Chew Magna and environs, organised by Chew Chat.

Quartet - Surviving Winter

Funding for WERN's Community Oil buying scheme, to enable us to maintain free memberships for older clients with limited means.

Quartet - Rural Links

A special award from Quartet for Rural Links' Music project. The grant is intended to help the development of the project once current pandemic restrictions are lifted.

Quartet - Wessex (Chew Chat)

Funding to enable Chew Chat, a local voluntary group, develop social activities for older people in Chew Magna and environs.

Quartet - Events

Grants received through Quartet to fund events for older people to promote social inclusion.

Quartet - Covid-19

A grant to help projects meet the costs of providing services during the pandemic. The funding supported our two Village Agent projects and helped users of our Rural Links services to access digitally.

Sperring Trust

This funding supports the recruitment of an additional Village Agent to serve Midsomer Norton and environs.

EA - Water Environment Improvement Fund

Water Environment Improvement Funding from Environment Agency for water management improvements in the Bristol Avon catchment area. WERN managed the grant process, making awards to three local projects.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

16. Movements in funds (continued)

Prior period comparative	At 1 April 2019	Income £	Expenditure £	At 31 March 2020 £
Restricted funds				
Chew Valley Community CIC	11,187	3,318	(380)	14,125
Chew Valley Dementia Group	499	-	(499)	-
St Monica Trust	4,369	30,000	(23,231)	11,138
Care Forum - Healthwatch	2,500	2,500	(5,000)	-
Quartet - Surviving Winter	-	1,800	(705)	1,095
Quartet - Rural Links	1,292	-	(1,292)	-
Quartet - Community Wellness	1,050	-	(1,050)	-
Quartet - Events	1,000	580	(825)	755
Rural Connections in North Somerset	-	21,000	(21,000)	-
Total restricted funds	<u>21,897</u>	<u>59,198</u>	<u>(53,982)</u>	<u>27,113</u>
Unrestricted funds				
General funds	<u>110,388</u>	<u>155,838</u>	<u>(179,052)</u>	<u>87,174</u>
Total unrestricted funds	<u>110,388</u>	<u>155,838</u>	<u>(179,052)</u>	<u>87,174</u>
Total funds	<u><u>132,285</u></u>	<u><u>215,036</u></u>	<u><u>(233,034)</u></u>	<u><u>114,287</u></u>

17. Operating lease commitments

The charity had operating leases at the year end with total future minimum lease payments as follows:

	2021 £	2020 £
Amount falling due:		
Within 1 year	-	5,833
Within 1 - 5 years	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>5,833</u>

18. Related parties

WERN is a founder member of West of England Civil Society Partnership CIC (WoE CS). Chris Head, executive director of WERN is also a director of WoE CS. During the year, there were no related party transactions with the organisation (2020: paid a start up contribution grant of £1,500 and purchased services amounting to £460 from the organisation).